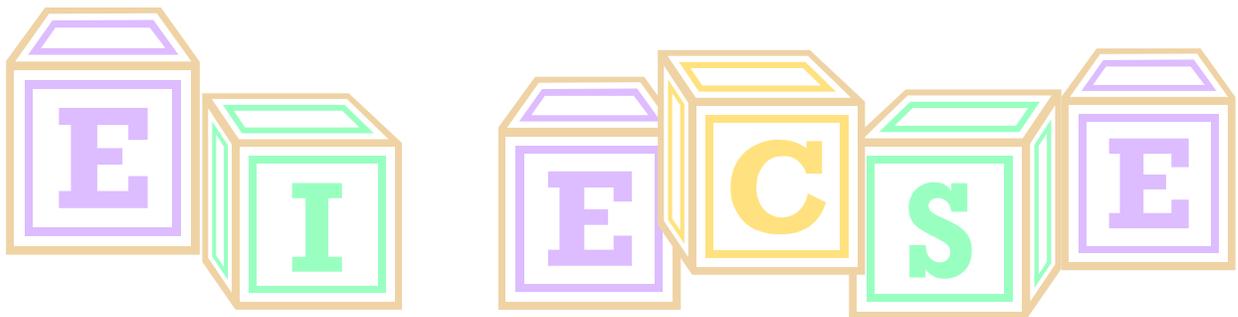


# HB 4165 §11 Joint Workgroup

Recommendations to Better Coordinate and Improve Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education Services

- State Interagency Coordinating Council
- Early Learning Council



# Executive Summary

SB 909, passed by the 2011 Oregon Legislature, called for the creation of a unified student-centered system of education, preschool through college. This legislation was the first step in Governor Kitzhaber’s plan to improve educational outcomes through a coordinated public education system. The Early Learning Council was created as part of SB 909, to organize a “high functioning and well-coordinated system of early learning programs”. It was in the context of these planning discussions, that concerns arose related to the nature of the relationship between Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) services to young children with disabilities and the proposed Early Learning System.

As a response to these concerns, the 2012 Oregon Legislature included a directive in HB 4165(11) for the Early Learning Council and the State Interagency Coordinating Council which advises on the EI/ECSE programs to develop a joint workgroup report by September 30, 2012 that:

“...shall describe the unique complexities of providing early childhood special education and early intervention services and shall make recommendations for possible ways to better coordinate and improve the delivery of those services...”

This report from the joint workgroup reflects the initial efforts to implement the HB 4165(11) charge and develop a collaborative process between the ELC and the SICC dedicated to better coordination and improvement in the delivery of services to young children with disabilities and their families.

The unique complexities and the recommendations listed below reflect consensus of the workgroup. The full report contains additional recommendations that were either not fully vetted or agreed to by the workgroup members. Additionally, the

full report contains stakeholder input the workgroup was not able to consider. The workgroup operated under an extremely compressed timeframe and members expressed a desire for an opportunity to continue their work and to engage in more in-depth review of recommendations and consideration of stakeholder input.

### **Unique Complexities of the EI/ECSE System**

The workgroup defined unique complexities of the EI/ECSE system as elements of EI/ECSE that because of their unique and/or complex nature could make service design, implementation and coordination more challenging to ensure positive outcomes for children and families. The following list of unique complexities is organized by EI/ECSE components such as: program requirements, staffing, eligibility, outcomes and reporting, direct services, procedural safeguards family engagement and areas where EI/ECSE has been successful.

#### **Early Learning System Planning Unique Complexity**

- This group recognizes that further planning regarding EI/ECSE is dependent on determining which children and families receiving EI/ECSE services fit into the target populations prioritized by the Early Learning System Transformation.

#### **Staffing Unique Complexities**

- Federal and state laws require that staff providing EI/ECSE services hold a breadth of special licenses.
- Staffing levels change in a geographic location depending on how many children in that area require services and the types of services they need. The provider must find licensed staff in the area to provide those services while adhering to the prescribed timelines for services. It is hard to project where staff will be needed because it depends on where children are born, live and move.
- Adequate staffing is often difficult to achieve in rural areas.

### Program Requirement Unique Complexities

- EI/ECSE programs are entitlement programs with complex, strict Federal and State laws governing all program aspects from Child Find, eligibility, services delivered, transitions and rapid timelines for providing services to outcome reporting, required staff licensing, and strong procedural rights for families.
- EI/ECSE programs cannot have waitlists. Services must be provided within the required timelines when a child is identified as eligible. This creates challenges to caseloads, staffing and a program's ability to meet the needs of the child.
- State and Federal Law mandate joint responsibilities between school districts and EI/ECSE programs which the programs cannot alter, such as providing transportation to access services and creating a plan for each child transitioning from EI/ECSE services to kindergarten.

### Outcomes and Reporting Unique Complexities

- Technical federal reporting requirements may require significant administrative work and special staff knowledge; however the reporting does reflect aggregate child progress annually.
- EI/ECSE attempts to close developmental gaps and progress is measured at the individual child level through the Individual and Family Services Plan (IFSP) goals rather than test scores.

### Eligibility Unique Complexity

- Children are eligible based on their disability, developmental delay or sensory disability. Income, education and location are not part of eligibility determination.

### Direct Services Unique Complexities

- EI/ECSE programs require that each child receive a customized, legally mandated service plan called an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) which is based on child and family needs. Thus, EI/ECSE must synthesize service

levels and program components to wrap around the child and family.

- EI/ECSE programs serve young children with complex needs and learning styles that require appropriate tools, skills, individualized services, modification and adaptations.
- EI/ECSE programs must follow a federally defined procedure with private community preschools to determine what services will be provided to children with disabilities whose parents have declined the IFSP services previously offered by the EI/ECSE program.

#### Procedural Safeguards Unique Complexities

- Procedural safeguards created in law give families assurances and legal recourse that programs will operate with a higher standard of procedural care and expectation of individual rights.
- IDEA requires free and appropriate education which creates a prescribed process to EI/ECSE.

#### Family Engagement Unique Complexities

- In addition to delay or disability requiring EI/ECSE services, families may experience poverty, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Funding is not designed to address these issues, but programs must be sensitive and provide support around these issues.
- Many families eligible for EI/ECSE services may not be eligible for other programs, such as Head Start. When delivering services to these families, EI/ECSE providers must give special consideration to the fact EI/ECSE is the only program working with the family.
- When a child is deemed eligible for EI/ECSE services, it is often the first time the family learns of their child's disability. Program staff must be supportive and help families navigate the system as the families goes through periods of grief and fear.

#### Areas where EI/ECSE Has Been Successful

- EI/ECSE programs span both health care and educational systems to

provide services, and have had early success addressing barriers to information sharing created by HIPAA and FERPA.

- Oregon’s seamless system from birth to five years old eliminates the transition between Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education programs thereby providing better service delivery, progress tracking, program accountability and efficient use of resources.

## **Recommendations to Better Coordinate and Improve EI/ECSE Service Delivery**

The following recommendations represent recommendations approved by workgroup consensus. The full report includes a list of recommendations the workgroup did not have time to fully vet or approve. The workgroup organized its recommendations into the following categories: continued joint planning, early identification and risk assessment, all children have early learning opportunities, outcome focus, parental access and transparency, integrated data system, consolidated governance, global budget, and trained and supported workforce.

### **Continued Joint Planning Recommendation**

- The Workgroup recommends that it continue to meet on an ongoing basis throughout Oregon’s Early Learning System transformation because more work is still required to fully explore the role of EI/ECSE services in the Early Learning System.

### **Early Identification and Risk Assessment Recommendation**

- Make screening universal and increase the early identification and referral of children with developmental delays and disabilities to EI/ECSE programs. This supports the Child Find requirements of EI/ECSE.

### **All Children Have Early Learning Opportunities Recommendations**

- Build upon and support Oregon’s unique, seamless EI/ECSE system for children ages birth to five.
- Participate in the Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TQRIS) for

child care and early learning programs to improve the overall quality of early learning opportunities for children by working with the Oregon Childcare Division and the Inclusive Childcare Program.

- Utilize EI/ECSE staff to support children with developmental delays and disabilities in inclusive environments by training and coaching providers how to include children with disabilities and delays and how to meet their needs.
- Strengthen joint efforts through collaborative agreements between EI/ECSE providers and schools during a child's transition to kindergarten.
- Identify EI/ECSE program requirements and other procedural safeguards such as HIPAA and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which present challenges to coordination with other early childhood programs. Identify ways to better address these challenges and improve coordination with other early childhood programs.

#### Outcomes Focus Recommendation

- An EI/ECSE representative shall participate in the efforts to create universal outcome language that is readily understood by healthcare, childcare and EI/ECSE providers as well as families.

#### Parental Access and Transparency Recommendation

- Encourage early childhood programs to use a planning model to help parents understand their child's strengths, learning styles and goals.

#### Integrated Data Systems Recommendation

- Appoint EI/ECSE representative to serve on the ELC Data Team ensuring recognition of the existing ecWeb system currently used in EI/ECSE programs. This system is able to track children into the K-12 system.

#### Consolidated Governance Recommendation

- Provide a strong connection between EI/ECSE and the Early Learning Initiative by providing representation through either: 1) a liaison model

where one person is appointed to both the SICC and to the ELC; or 2) a cross representation model where a member of the ELC shall be appointed to the SICC and a member of the SICC is appointed to the ELC.<sup>1</sup>

#### Global Budget Recommendation

- A representative from EI/ECSE should be appointed to the Children’s Budget Workgroup to explore and determine if EI/ECSE should be included or excluded in whole or in part from the Children’s Global Budget.

#### Trained and Supported Workforce Recommendations

- Create opportunities for collaborative learning inclusive of all early childhood providers to implement successful strategies when working with children with disabilities.
- Expand partnerships with higher education to develop and promote programs that offer: 1) continuing education opportunities for existing staff; and 2) produce graduates who demonstrate proficiency in providing direct services and consultation to meet the needs of children with disabilities across all of Oregon, especially in rural areas where recruitment of highly trained staff can be more challenging.

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<sup>1</sup> Following the final workgroup meeting, a few workgroup members expressed reservations about this recommendation; however the workgroup did not reconvene to discuss these reservations.

# HB 4165 Introduction and Report Charge

SB 909, which passed in the 2011 legislative session, called for the creation of a unified student-centered system of education, preschool through college. This legislation was the first step in Governor Kitzhaber’s plan to improve educational outcomes through a coordinated public education system.

The Early Learning Council was created as part of SB 909, to organize a “high functioning and well-coordinated system of early learning programs”. It was in the context of these planning discussions, that concerns arose related to the nature of the relationship between Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) to the proposed Early Learning System.

As a response to these concerns, the 2012 Oregon Legislature included a directive in HB 4165(11) for the Early Learning Council and the State Interagency Coordinating Council which advises on the EI/ECSE programs to develop a joint workgroup report by September 30, 2012 that:

“...shall describe the unique complexities of providing early childhood special education and early intervention services and shall make recommendations for possible ways to better coordinate and improve the delivery of those services...”

This report from the joint workgroup reflects the initial efforts to implement the HB 4165(11) charge and develop a collaborative process between the ELC and the SICC dedicated to better coordination and improvement in the delivery of services to young children with disabilities and their families.

The unique complexities and the recommendations listed below reflect consensus of the workgroup. The report also contains additional recommendations that

# HB 4165 Introduction and Report Charge

were either not fully vetted or agreed to by the workgroup members as well as stakeholder input the workgroup was not able to consider.

The workgroup operated under an extremely compressed timeframe and members expressed a desire for an opportunity to continue their work and to engage in more in-depth review of recommendations and consideration of stakeholder input.

This report is organized into the following sections:

- A brief introduction to the ELC and SICCC
- The joint workgroup process
- A brief introduction to EI/ECSE services
- Unique complexities of EI/ECSE
- Recommendations the workgroup accepted by consensus
- Recommendations the workgroup did not have time to completely discuss or accept; and
- Appendices representing stakeholder input the workgroup did not have time to fully consider

# The ELC and SICC

The ELC and the SICC are policy organizations that are both created by statute and tasked with advising various state boards and agencies about early childhood education. The ELC and SICC differ, however, in the populations of children and programs they consider when making advisory decisions.

The ELC considers all of Oregon's early learning programs and children ages birth to five as it fulfills its charge from the 2011 Oregon Legislature to assist the Oregon Education Investment Board oversee a unified system of early childhood services. The Governor appoints ELC members who provide the ELC with expertise in early childhood development, care, and education, family financial stability or populations disproportionately burdened by poor education outcomes.

The SICC focuses on children ages birth to five with developmental disabilities or delays. Under state and federal law, the SICC advises Oregon agencies, including the ELC, on matters relating to EI/ECSE services and policies. The Governor appoints members to the SICC, which is composed of Oregon agency representatives, EI/ECSE providers and parents of children with disabilities.

# The Joint Workgroup Process

This report marks an important first step in a collaborative process between the ELC and the SICC dedicated to better coordination and improvement in the delivery of services in EI/ECSE. The job is not complete, however, and the workgroup recommends that this process and joint workgroup continue as Oregon transforms its Early Learning System.

Under an exceptionally constrained timeline and only three half-day meetings, representatives from the ELC and the SICC formed a fifteen member workgroup that used a facilitated, collaborative process to develop this report. The process emphasized transparency and establishing trust and dialogue between the ELC and the SICC.

Workgroup members expressed frustration that the compressed timeline did not allow more in depth review of recommendations and consideration of stakeholder input. If this joint workgroup continues, as recommended, the workgroup would like to expand stakeholder input and specifically consider feedback from the 514 respondents of the July, 2012 SICC Stakeholder Survey (Appendix A) and the recommendations from participants of the LICC Annual Retreat September 21, 2012 (Appendix B).

# EI/ECSE Services

Early Intervention / Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) are programs that provide specialized educational services to children birth through 5 years of age and their families throughout Oregon. The services are provided only to children with identified disabilities and/or significant delays and children who are born with a condition likely to result in a developmental delay.

EI/ECSE services may include therapies, specialized educational supports and parent training and are provided in a variety of settings including through home visits, child care programs, community preschools and in specialized classrooms.

The programs are mandated in state and federal law and the individualized services they provide are an entitlement to eligible children regardless of family income or geographic location. Additionally, strong procedural safeguards provide parents legal due process rights when disputes over services arise. The Oregon Department of Education contracts with nine Educational Service Districts to operate the programs. Annually, approximately 12,000 children receive EI/ECSE services in Oregon.



# Unique Complexities of EI/ECSE

## “Unique Complexity” Definition:

Unique Complexities are elements of EI/ECSE that because of their unique and/or complex nature could make service design, implementation and coordination more challenging to ensure positive outcomes for children and families.

## Early Learning System Planning Complexity:

This group recognizes that further planning regarding EI/ECSE is dependent on determining which children and families receiving EI/ECSE services fit into the target populations prioritized by the Early Learning System Transformation.

## Staffing Unique Complexities:

- Federal and state laws require that staff providing EI/ECSE services hold a breadth of special licenses.
- Staffing levels change in a geographic location depending on how many children in that area require services and the types of services they need. The provider must find licensed staff in the area to provide those services while adhering to the prescribed timelines for services. It is hard to project where staff will be needed because it depends on where children are born, live and move.
- Adequate staffing is often difficult to achieve in rural areas.

## Program Requirement Unique Complexities:

- EI/ECSE programs are entitlement programs with complex, strict Federal and State laws governing all program aspects from Child Find, eligibility, services delivered, transitions and rapid timelines for providing services to outcome reporting, required staff licensing, and strong procedural rights for families.
- EI/ECSE programs cannot have waitlists. Services must be provided within the required timelines when a child is identified as eligible. This creates challenges to caseloads, staffing and a program's ability to meet the needs of the child.
- State and Federal Law mandate joint responsibilities between school districts and EI/ECSE programs which the programs cannot alter, such as providing transportation to access services and creating a plan for each child transitioning from EI/ECSE services to kindergarten.

## Outcomes and Reporting Unique Complexities:

- Technical federal reporting requirements may require significant administrative work and special staff knowledge; however the reporting does reflect aggregate child progress annually.
- EI/ECSE attempts to close developmental gaps and progress is measured at the individual child level through the Individual and Family Services Plan (IFSP) goals rather than test scores.

### Eligibility Unique Complexity:

Children are eligible based on their disability, developmental delay or sensory disability. Income, education and location are not part of eligibility determination.

### Direct Services Unique Complexities:

- EI/ECSE programs require that each child receive a customized, legally mandated service plan called an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) which is based on child and family needs. Thus, EI/ECSE must synthesize service levels and program components to wrap around the child and family.
- EI/ECSE programs serve young children with complex needs and learning styles that require appropriate tools, skills, individualized services, modification and adaptations.
- EI/ECSE programs must follow a federally defined procedure with private community preschools to determine what services will be provided to children with disabilities whose parents have declined the IFSP services previously offered by the EI/ECSE program.

### Procedural Safeguards Unique Complexities:

- Procedural safeguards created in law give families assurances and legal recourse that programs will operate with a higher standard of procedural care and expectation of individual rights.
- IDEA requires free and appropriate education which creates a prescribed process to EI/ECSE.

## Family Engagement Unique Complexities:

- In addition to delay or disability requiring EI/ECSE services, families may experience poverty, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Funding is not designed to address these issues, but programs must be sensitive and provide support around these issues.
- Many families eligible for EI/ECSE services may not be eligible for other programs, such as Head Start. When delivering services to these families, EI/ECSE providers must give special consideration to the fact EI/ECSE is the only program working with the family.
- When a child is deemed eligible for EI/ECSE services, it is often the first time the family learns of their child's disability. Program staff must be supportive and help families navigate the system as the families goes through periods of grief and fear.

## Areas Where EI/ECSE Has Been Successful:

- EI/ECSE programs span both health care and educational systems to provide services, and have had early success addressing barriers to information sharing created by HIPAA and FERPA.
- Oregon's seamless system from birth to five years old eliminates the transition between Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education programs thereby providing better service delivery, progress tracking, program accountability and efficient use of resources.

# Recommendation: Continue Joint Planning

## Recommendation:

This group recommends that it continue to meet on an ongoing basis throughout Oregon's Early Learning System transformation because more work is still required to fully explore the role of EI/ECSE services in the Early Learning System.



*"The greatest thing these programs have given me and my children is hope, and sometimes on really bad days, that's all we have left."*

# Recommendation: Early Identification

## Recommendation:

Make screening universal and increase the early identification and referral of children with developmental delays and disabilities to EI/ECSE programs. This supports the Child Find requirements of EI/ECSE.



*“Instead of learning that our son was spoiled and out of control, we learned that he was experiencing difficulty communicating and learning. It was comforting to hear that his frustration and extreme behavior was something that could be improved and was not the result of bad parenting.”*

# Recommendation: Early Learning Opportunities

## Recommendations:

- Build upon and support Oregon’s unique, seamless EI/ECSE system for children ages birth to five.
- Participate in the Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TQRIS) for child care and early learning programs to improve the overall quality of early learning opportunities for children by working with the Oregon Childcare Division and the Inclusive Childcare Program.
- Utilize EI/ECSE staff to support children with developmental delays and disabilities in inclusive environments by training and coaching providers how to include children with disabilities and delays and how to meet their needs.
- Strengthen joint efforts through collaborative agreements between EI/ECSE providers and schools during a child’s transition to kindergarten.
- Identify EI/ECSE program requirements and other procedural safeguards such as HIPAA and Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which present challenges to coordination with other early childhood programs. Identify ways to better address these challenges and improve coordination with other early childhood programs.

## Recommendation: Outcome Focus

### Recommendation:

An EI/ECSE representative shall participate in the efforts to create universal outcome language that is readily understood by healthcare, childcare and EI/ECSE providers as well as families.

*“Today, he attends a community pre-school and is looking forward to entering kindergarten next fall. We do not anticipate him needing any special education services for kindergarten or for the rest of his schooling.”*

## Recommendation: Parental Access

### Recommendation:

Encourage early childhood programs to use a planning model to help parents understand their child’s strengths, learning styles and goals.

*“With each passing visit, I began to feel empowered. There was something I could do.”*

# Recommendation: Integrated Data System

## Recommendation:

Appoint EI/ECSE representative to serve on the ELC Data Team ensuring recognition of the existing ecWeb system currently used in EI/ECSE programs. This system is able to track children into the K-12 system.



*“When he was diagnosed, his geneticist told us we were lucky to be in Oregon.”*

# Recommendation: Governance Structures

## Recommendation:

Provide a strong connection between EI/ECSE and the Early Learning Initiative by providing representation through either: 1) a liaison model where one person is appointed to both the SICC and to the ELC; or 2) a cross representation model where a member of the ELC shall be appointed to the SICC and a member of the SICC is appointed to the ELC.<sup>2</sup>



*“Parents of children with disabilities are especially vulnerable – wanting, desiring normalcy – being told of hundreds or thousands of “cures” ranging from experimental therapies to vitamins and extracts. It is comforting to know you can talk to someone with training and knowledge in the field.”*

<sup>2</sup> Following the final workgroup meeting, a few workgroup members expressed reservations about this recommendation; however the workgroup did not reconvene to discuss these reservations.

# Recommendation: Global Budget

## Recommendation:

A representative from EI/ECSE should be appointed to the Children's Budget Workgroup to explore and determine if EI/ECSE should be included or excluded in whole or in part from the Children's Global Budget.



*“As a full time working mother with a blended family of six, it was a relief to find out that all of the services given by EI/ECSE were at no cost, especially since neither my insurance nor my spouse’s insurance covers care for Autism.”*

# Recommendation: Trained Workforce

## Recommendations:

- Create opportunities for collaborative learning inclusive of all early childhood providers to implement successful strategies when working with children with disabilities.
- Expand partnerships with higher education to develop and promote programs that offer: 1) continuing education opportunities for existing staff; and 2) produce graduates who demonstrate proficiency in providing direct services and consultation to meet the needs of children with disabilities across all of Oregon, especially in rural areas where recruitment of highly trained staff can be more challenging.

*“To begin to understand...what I could do to help my child, who could assist our family and how, where to turn for support, and that we were not alone in our challenges...was to begin to have hope again. That’s what EI/ECSE does...it restores hope.”*

## Recommendations The Workgroup Did Not Adopt and Needed More Time To Consider:

1. Once children are identified as eligible for EI/ECSE with developmental delays or disabilities facilitate identification coordination of additional services and supports for children and families who have other identified risk factors such as poverty.
2. Review Screening Tools Workgroup recommendations for more coordinated screening and referral tools to universally implement across EI/ECSE and other Early Learning Programs. The comprehensive assessment tools must be comprehensive and available to families, caregivers, and the medical community in an accessible format.
3. Create incentives for EI/ECSE programs to use quality early childhood and child care programs to coordinate EI/ECSE service delivery in these programs. This supports least restrictive environment requirements and allows more children with disabilities to be integrated with their typical peers.
4. Based on capacity assessments conducted across the state, identify EI/ECSE programs that have positive outcomes and apply scalability principles to these programs to determine if these successes are location specific or can be implemented statewide as best practices.
5. Identify areas that could benefit from better coordination and services and identify barriers to early intervention access for families.
6. Map system to understand where support can be naturally coordinated in the community.
7. Identify aspects of the Family Resource Manager's role that the IFSP and EI/ECSE provider may already be doing.

## Recommendations The Workgroup Did Not Adopt and Needed More Time To Consider:

8. Consider working closely with developing Community Hub models to closely align IFSP
9. Pool all the parent education programs to assure alignment of the message “ready for school” and to determine audiences across entities that might benefit from these sessions. This may reduce the “Silo Impact,” for example dealing with problem behaviors can go across entities.
10. Improve parent survey and report card for EI/ECSE services.
11. Examine and define points in the planning and budget processes of ODE and EI/ECSE that should be connected or aligned with the Early Learning System particularly when setting state targets and activities to achieve targets.
12. Review administrative structures for EI/ECSE programs.
13. Provide sufficient resources and authority for the Early Learning Council and Early Learning System Director to coordinate and align all services to children and families.
14. Oregon Department of Education, as the state agency responsible for IDEA parts B and C, should coordinate any state performance plans and/or applications with the Early Learning System Director in order to ensure coordination across federal funding streams aimed to serve the needs of children.

# Acknowledgements

**Facilitator:**

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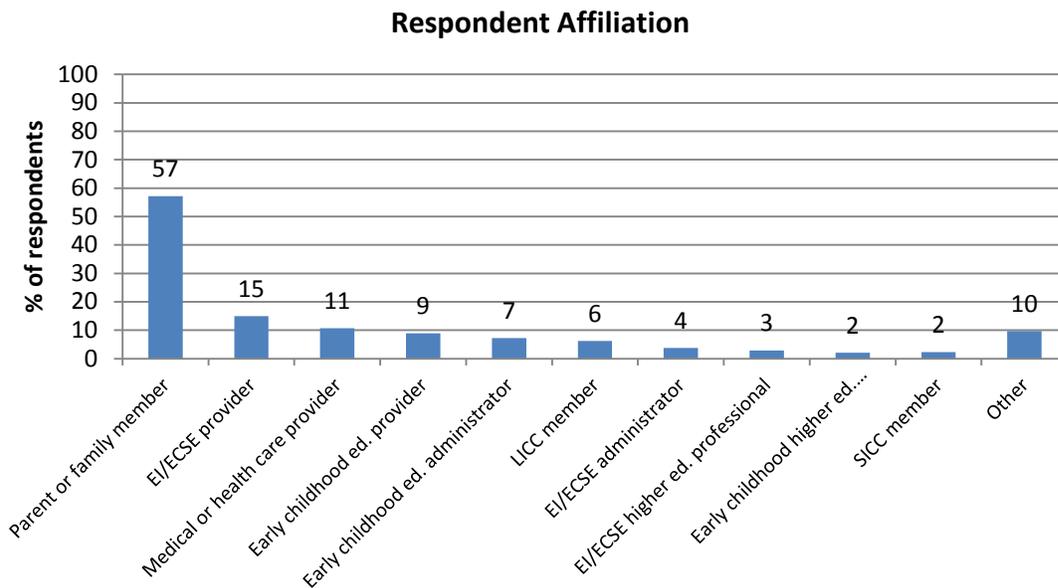
## Appendix A: SICC State Interagency Coordinating Council Stakeholder Survey Report July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012

### Introduction

The State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) conducted a survey to gather input from Early Intervention (EI) and Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) stakeholders in Oregon to bring to the conversation with the Early Learning Council. The survey link was distributed in June 2012 to EI/ECSE stakeholders through programs across the state.

### Survey Respondents

Eight hundred and ninety six (896) people opened the survey link, and 514 of them went on to complete the survey. The 514 respondents were asked their affiliation, as seen in the following graph (they could choose more than one). Slightly more than half of all respondents (57%) identified as parents or family members. Nineteen percent (19%) of respondents chose more than one affiliation.

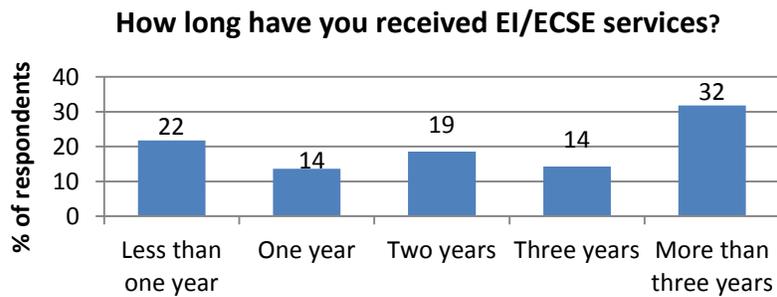


The survey consisted of 12 questions: six questions specifically for respondents who identified as parents/family members, and six questions for all other respondents. Respondents who identified as parents/family members were

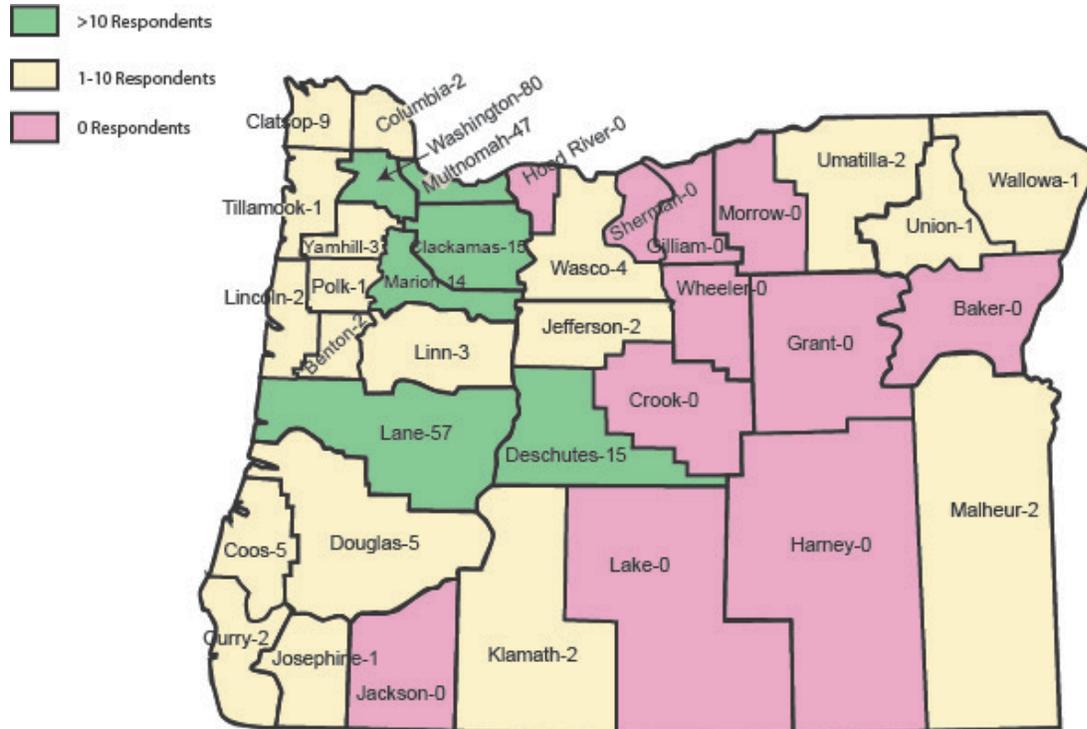
directed to their six questions and then given the option to end the survey or continue on to the remaining six questions. Respondents who did NOT identify as parents or family members were funneled directly to the second set of six questions.

### Targeted Parent/Family Member Questions

All parents/family members were asked how they have received EI/ECSE services. The following graph shows the distribution of answers. As the graph details, approximately one third of respondents (32%) have received services for more than three years, another one third (33%) have received services for two-three years, and the remaining respondents (35%) have received services for one year or less.



Family members were also asked where they lived. As seen on the map, respondents represented 25 of the 36 Oregon counties. The counties with the most respondents are Washington (n=80), Lane (n=57), and Multnomah (n=47).



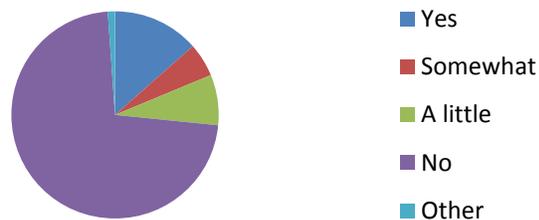
>10 Respondents – Clackamas, Deschutes, Lane, Marion, Multnomah, Washington

1-10 Respondents – Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jefferson, Josephine, Klamath, Lincoln, Linn, Malheur, Polk, Tillamook, Umatilla, Union, Yamhill, Wallowa, Wasco

0 Respondents – Baker, Crook, Gilliam, Grant, Harney, Hood River, Jackson, Lake, Morrow, Sherman, Wheeler

Parents/family members were asked if they know about Oregon’s new Early Learning Council and new education laws. There were 268 responses to this item. The majority of respondents (72%) reported that they did not know about the ELC, as noted in the chart below.

Do you know about Oregon's new Early Learning Council and the new education laws?



The 294 parent/family members were also asked two open-ended questions. Each of the questions and their most common themes are discussed below.

**“What has been the most helpful to you and your child from the EI/ECSE program?”**

278 respondents answered this item (they could have more than one answer each). The most common themes among the responses were:

- Services that their child received (112 responses)
- Parent information/resources/support/guidance received as a part of the program (101 responses)
- EI/ECSE staff (44 responses)
- Specific improvements their child made while in the program (34 responses)
- The coordination of services/ team approach (16 responses)

**“What services or supports have you needed that are not provided to your child or family by your EI/ECSE program?”**

235 respondents answered this item (they could have more than one answer each). The most common themes among the responses were:

- NA/None (68 responses)
- More services (65 responses)

- More of a specialized service (e.g. audiology, ear mold fitting, etc.) (13 responses)
- Respite care (7 responses)

### **Overall EI/ECSE Stakeholder Questions**

EI/ECSE stakeholders that did not identify as parent/family members (n=220) were directed to the six overall EI/ECSE stakeholder questions. Parent/family members were also given the option to continue on to these stakeholder questions. Forty five percent (45%, n=133) of the parent/family members chose to continue with the overall stakeholder questions, for a total of 353 respondents to this part of the survey. Each of the six questions and their most common themes are discussed below.

### **“What do you think are the unique requirements and complexities for providing early childhood special education and early intervention services?”**

296 respondents answered this item (they could have more than one answer). The most common themes among the responses were:

- The diverse group of children served (72 responses)
- Having enough funding/stability of funding/funding methods (49 responses)
- No wait list (40 responses)
- The high caseloads/ caseloads that ebb and flow (28 responses)
- The specialized skills needed to serve such a diverse group of children (28 responses)
- Adequate staffing (19 responses)
- Time constraints (18 responses)
- Legal mandates/requirements (15 responses)
- Paperwork requirements (13 responses)
- Coordinating multiple services (12 responses)
- Complex family issues/at-risk families (11 responses)

**“What are some examples of coordination between EI/ECSE and another service that works well?”**

272 respondents answered this item (they could have more than one answer).

The most common themes among the responses were:

- Head Start (104 responses)
- Community preschools (33 responses)
- Public health nurses/nurse home visitors (24 responses)
- CaCoon (19 responses)
- K-12 school districts (18 responses)
- Healthy Start (14 responses)
- Medical providers (13 responses)
- Child care providers (10 responses)
- DHS/ CWS (10 responses)
- Babies First (8 responses)
- Relief Nursery (7 responses)
- Morrison Center (7 responses)

**“What are examples of coordination that are not working well?”**

251 respondents answered this item (they could have more than one answer).

The most common themes among the responses were:

- The K-12 system/ K teachers (17 responses)
- Overall lack of time for coordination (16 responses)
- Overall coordination of services (14 responses)
- Head Start (13 responses)
- DHS/CWS (12 responses)
- Mental health services (12 responses)
- Community preschools (10 responses)
- Medical providers (10 responses)
- Transition to kindergarten/ Other transitions (10 responses)
- Overall lack of services (9 responses)
- Parent outreach/Parent support (9 responses)
- Overall communication (9 responses)
- Private therapists (8 responses)

**“What are some suggestions of ways to better coordinate and improve the delivery of early childhood special education and early intervention services?”**

241 respondents answered this item (they could have more than one answer).

The most common themes among the responses were:

- Coordinate services between/among agencies (78 responses)
- Provide more parent outreach/support/guidance (21 responses)
- Increase services (19 responses)
- Collaboration/communication between partners/agencies (15 responses)
- Increase funding (15 responses)
- Create a centralized database (11 responses)
- Medical provider outreach (10 responses)
- Increase time for coordination (8 responses)

**“What do you think are the opportunities with Oregon’s Early Learning System?”**

216 respondents answered this item (they could have more than one answer).

The most common themes among the responses were:

- More coordination/ more partner collaboration/ more coordinated services (57 responses)
- More and/or improved direct child services (27 responses)
- More efficient services/ less duplication (21 responses)
- Better family support (15 responses)
- More funding/ more stable funding (14 responses)
- Earlier identification of children in need of services (13 responses)
- Improved access for families to services (10 responses)
- Improved kindergarten readiness (9 responses)

**“What do you think are the challenges with Oregon’s Early Learning System?”**

225 respondents answered this item (they could have more than one answer).

The most common themes among the responses were:

- Having enough/adequate funding for the new system (54 responses)
- Getting everyone on the same page/Communication/ Coordinating (39 responses)
- Capacity issues/ potential to dilute services (22 responses)
- The various and complex program requirements (14 responses)
- Change is hard/ acceptance of new system (13 responses)
- Ensuring adequate local input (13 responses)
- Ensuring adequate parent input (9 responses)

Rural challenges/issues (8 responses)

## **Appendix B            Local Interagency Coordinating Council EI/ECSE Recommendations, September 21, 2012**

At their annual retreat on September 21, 2012, the State Interagency Coordinating Council asked members of Local Interagency Coordinating Councils (LICCs) for recommendations to better coordinate and improve EI/ECSE services. LICCs are local councils that advise and assist EI/ECSE service contractors to: better identify EI/ECSE service needs, coordinate services with other agencies, create local dispute resolution procedures and develop interagency agreements.

The 62 LICC stakeholders who collectively developed EI/ECSE recommendations in this document represented 31 Oregon counties, The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs and all nine of Oregon's education regions.

The stakeholders framed their recommendations under the following categories: all children have early learning opportunities, early identification and risk assessment, coordination and integration support, outcomes focus, integrated data system, consolidate governance structures, global budget, parental access and transparency: TQRIS, trained and supported workforce and other recommendations and comments.

### **All Children Have Early Learning Opportunities**

- Increase access to quality early learning settings. This will enable children who are also eligible for EI/ECSE services to be in high quality early learning environments and EI/ECSE providers will be expected to support the early childhood program staff with help for the children in their programs to be successful and access the curriculum and activities successfully.
- Map what early learning programs are available in each community. Develop a plan of how all children who need a quality early learning environment can access one. Develop a cooperative of quality placements (including Head Start programs, community preschool programs, child care sites, etc.) that offer a continuum of options for family choice and opportunities for children with disabilities and developmental delays.
- Provide universal preschool with access for all. Ensure that a needs-based

tiered system of wrap around services are available in the preschool setting to all children who need them. Many children in EI/ECSE programs and their families also have other needs that cannot be addressed with EI/ECSE funds and a wraparound model could greatly benefit them.

- Provide incentives to programs that will enroll children with disabilities and developmental delays in their programs and work with EI/ECSE professionals to ensure that children have access to the curriculum and activities and make progress.

### **Early Identification and Risk Assessment**

- Build upon existing systems of referral and evaluation (for children and families) and linkages to services (in a broader sense) to assist with more children getting identified and linked with the right services earlier in the process.
- EI/ECSE should expand and strengthen linkages with the medical community and other providers doing risk assessments for children and families. Medical providers, child care providers and other early childhood providers need to have time and training to do developmental assessments.
- Ensure that there is an evidence based birth screening tool and a family risk assessment in addition to a developmental screening.
- Provide incentives to parents for bringing their child in for a Well Baby/Child check-up which will include completing a developmental screening. It is more difficult to pressure private insurance companies and uninsured families to do this.
- Develop and implement a system to follow-up with children who score below normal limits on developmental screenings, but will not qualify for services.
- Create and strengthen the linkages between screening agencies/personnel and services/programs.

## **Coordination and Integration Support: Use of Family Support Managers and Consistent Regional Support**

- Family support managers must be well trained and cross trained on identifying needs and knowing the resources in the community where they provide services. The hope is to get the child and/or family to the right service(s) to meet their needs.
- Assure that family support managers avoid duplication of effort by not assuming responsibilities that are assigned to others in law. (EI/ECSE service coordinators or Head Start family advocates, etc.) Ensure there is consistency in the role of a family support manager through standardizing functions.
- Services provided to a child in EI/ECSE should be integrated or coordinated with each other and provided in the child's natural environment to the maximum extent possible.

## **Outcomes Focus: service contracts, kindergarten readiness, and first grade reading**

- Expand the “ready for kindergarten” definition to include focus on schools being ready to meet the needs of children entering, including children from EI/ECSE programs.
- Children in EI/ECSE programs should be compared against themselves in order to measure progress and improvement in developmental rates of growth. Programs are individualized and skill levels and abilities are widely variable for each child in EI/ECSE services. Norms for typically developing children should not be applied to children with individualized educational services (e.g. IFSP or IEP). Progress can be monitored for each child and if a child is not making progress, the program must find out why and adjust.
- Track children who have received EI/ECSE services at the end of K, first grade, third grades. (This should be done for all children receiving early learning services). EI/ECSE assigns SSID numbers when a child is made eligible and this same SSID stays with them throughout their school years.)

- The same curriculum based assessments are used with almost all EI/ECSE eligible children and these should be aligned to school age outcomes and possibly be part of the school achievement compacts.
- Include an outcome on the child’s ability to communicate thoughts and feelings.

### **Integrated Data System**

- Integrate EI/ECSE and K-12 data systems (including special education) and align the measures for accountability.
- Consider building on the ecWeb data system which is universally used in EI/ECSE programs across the state and ODE already has access to all of these data. It is an excellent tool for case management, referral and service tracking, outcomes tracking, immunization tracking, Medicaid billing, etc. In many communities, other programs serving EI/ECSE children are linked in to assist children and families. Some examples include: local school districts to assist with transitions into kindergarten, to Head Starts programs, the EDHI program, Regional programs.

### **Consolidate Governance Structures**

- Do not add another layer of administration or complexity.
- Don’t just “rearrange the system” and have it operate similarly or the same as it did before.
- We are glad everyone is looking at the uniqueness of EI/ECSE and still wondering how it fits overall into the EL system goals
- EI/ECSE should closely coordinate with the EL system for now, with cross representation and involvement in including children with disabilities and delays and their families with more needs. Interagency agreements can be required to make this happen and representation of EI/ECSE on EL Council at a state level and on local EL Hubs.

## **Global Budget**

- Stable and adequate funding is the goal. Global or otherwise, it must not take resources from one early childhood program to serve another. There is a hydraulic effect on other program when this is done.
- Increase day care subsidies for parents who need this.
- In EI/ECSE we must meet individualized needs therefore a fixed per child service rate would not work.
- Don't understand what this is and how it works and how funds would be allocated.
- Don't reduce funds going to EI/ECSE children to open access to all children to other services. We need more revenue to do what we know works.

## **Parental Access and Transparency: TQRIS**

- Include children with disabilities in all EL programs – EI/ECSE can provide support and training to providers.
- Support more high quality inclusive settings in local communities.
- Teach parents how to be part of a school environment / culture and to advocate for their child and make sure they get what they need. For parents who have children in EI/ECSE programs there are procedural safeguards and added considerations for parents to learn and use.
- Working and training parents is a priority for EI/ECSE programs, the content can be expanded to further some of the TQRIS goals of educating parents on quality early learning environments.

## **Trained and Supported Workforce:**

- Ensure that the family support manager personnel receive extensive

training to do all they are supposed to do and understand the parameters and functions of their position.

- EI/ECSE professionals currently provide training and support to Head Start and community preschool teachers in many areas around the state. This should be expanded and possibly be a required activity or incentivized activity.
- Offer incentives to child care providers for getting training to work with children who have disabilities and/or delays and enrolling them in their programs.
- Developing skills in promoting healthy social emotional development and identifying the need for early childhood mental health services should be a priority for professionals in early childhood work.

#### **Other Recommendations:**

- Many children fall through the cracks when they enter school at kindergarten after having been eligible for EI/ECSE service under a developmental delay eligibility category. These children often fail at academics, and adjusting to school classrooms. This could be minimized by extending the developmental delay eligibility category as an option to age 9 years (3<sup>rd</sup> grade).
- Steps and a process for a smooth transition into to school are required in law to begin the year before K entry for all EI/ECSE children. They are included as part of the child's IFSP. This requirement should be extended to school participation to make this more effective.
- All school services should begin by assuming a child will be educated with typical peers in school.
- Collaborate in areas where we can reduce duplication in service delivery such as using interpreters and translators, nurses etc.
- Identify and address service gaps. Many of the needed early childhood

resources are in short supply or are limited by the constraints of their funding source (e.g.: early childhood Mental Health services, Healthy Start should serve beyond first births, more Early Head Start, head Start, Relief Nurseries, etc.)

- Have a multimedia educational campaign for the importance of children's social emotional development and how to support it.
- Provide financial incentives for one parent to stay home with their child.
- Provide financial supports for two parent working families to access high quality early learning environments for their children based on a sliding scale.
- Promote paperwork reduction or using support staff to do this function and maximizing the time that licensed professionals spend with children and families.

#### **General Comments:**

- We appreciate the legislature and EL Council slowing down the process for EI/ECSE to make careful decisions.
- It would be great to have one easy to access place for all documents from joint subcommittees, work groups and meetings are producing in an understandable format for parents, community members and professionals.
- How are the needs of children who are not ready for kindergarten when they start school being addressed in schools?
- We are concerned that with increased screening, will there be enough resources available to refer children to once a need is identified.