



**STUDENT SUCCESS ACT**

# Early Childhood Professional Learning Plan

Legislative Report

Submitted by the Early Learning Division on

January 15, 2020

# Table of Contents

- Introduction.....3
- Purpose of this Report.....3
- The Importance of Early Care and Education and the Role of the Workforce.....3
- The Early Care and Education Workforce in Oregon.....6
- Key facts about the ECE Workforce.....6
- Best Practice in ECE Workforce and Organizing Framework..... 10
- Oregon Early Learning Division’s Current Investments..... 12
- Child Care Resource & Referral Entities (CCR&Rs) ..... 12
- Early Learning Hubs ..... 13
- Oregon Registry Online ..... 13
- Spark..... 13
- Philanthropic Investments..... 14
- Growing Master Trainers..... 14
- Southern Oregon and Central Oregon Early Learning Professional Development Consortiums..... 15
- Betty Gray Community College Scholarship..... 16
- Methodology ..... 18
- Stakeholder Recommendations ..... 20
- Ensuring an Equitable Professional Learning System that Maintains and Enhances the Diversity of the Workforce..... 20
- Recruitment and Respect ..... 22
- Preparation, Credentials, and Degrees ..... 23
- Professional Learning ..... 25
- Retention ..... 26
- Spending Proposal..... 27
- APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES ..... 29

## Introduction

### Purpose of this Report

With the passage of the Student Success Act (SSA) into law on May 20, 2019, an unprecedented investment of \$200 million is earmarked to enhance services targeting the prenatal to five period by providing services to both children and their families who face economic challenges. Advances in supporting greater access to quality child care without attention to the commensurate need for more high quality early childhood educators will be short-sighted. Oregon's Student Success Act will have limited impact for improving access to programs if the state lacks qualified staff.

In recognition of the critical role of educators in the success of the early learning investments in SSA, the legislature allocated \$12.5 million annually toward supporting the early care and education workforce. The intent of this report is to provide an overview of current professional learning practices designed to support Oregon's Early Learning workforce and to identify how to address gaps and create a more comprehensive and coordinated system with a focus on strategic use of earmarked legislative funding from the Student Success Act.

### The Importance of Early Care and Education and the Role of the Workforce

Early care and education (ECE) is an investment with nearly unprecedented return – from \$13 to \$18 of every dollar spent. Numerous nationally renowned economists, from [James Heckman](#), [Art Rolnick](#), and RAND analyst [Lynn Karoly](#), have proven over and over: investments in early learning pay huge economic, educational, and societal dividends. Investments in the Early Learning Workforce significantly contribute to these returns on investment. When early learning educators are supported in obtaining professional learning it directly and significantly affects the quality of early learning instruction for young children. Given the demographics of the early learning workforce, predominantly female, more racially and ethnically diverse than K-12 educators, and twice as likely to be enrolled in at least one public- support or health care program, supporting this workforce is also an equity imperative.

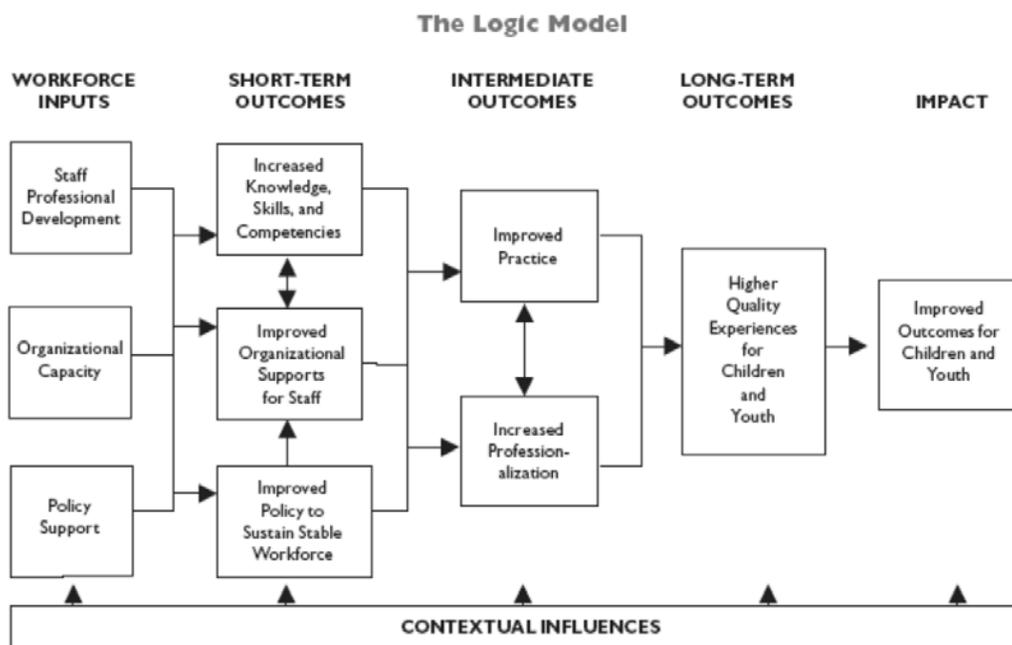
The quality of care provided can be impacted by a state's level of investment in its early childhood workforce and its ability to support professional growth and development. Like many states, some Oregonians still equate child care with the job of making sure young children are watched, fed, and kept safe, rather than recognizing the additional role of providing high quality environments to support and promote young children's optimal

development. The resulting inequities are clearly summarized by the Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California Berkeley:

*“...persistently low minimum qualifications set for a majority of educators working with children birth to age five perpetuates the false notion that teaching in early education requires less skill than teaching older children... [thus] **the qualifications a child can expect their teacher to meet have little to do with their developmental and educational needs, but are instead dependent on the type of programs available and affordable for their family.**”*

Researchers at Harvard have created a logic model (Figure 1) to illustrate the linkages and pathways between the workforce and child outcomes look like. Using a logic model can help inform decisions about both program and funding priorities. Several studies in the early childhood field reviewed by the Harvard Family Research Project show how the pathways connect all the way to outcomes for children.

FIGURE 1. HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT LOGIC MODEL



Of interest to this report are the implications for use of the Logic model in the areas of practice and policy. In order to support child outcomes, the Early Learning Division must support the workforce inputs noted in Figure 1. This includes ensuring staff are knowledgeable and skilled to create the environments children need through degrees, credentials, and ongoing professional learning. It also means that organizational supports – such as knowledgeable leaders/administrators and healthy, supportive workplace practices – are in place in order to

implement their expertise. Furthermore, it also means that organizations must be able to recruit staff to hire in the first place. This report will put forth a vision to address all of the elements of this logic model.

# The Early Care and Education Workforce in Oregon

Oregon has an early learning workforce comparable in size to the state’s workforce in real estate or wood products. The [2018 profile of the early learning workforce](#) in Oregon produced by the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership indicates there were 24,203 individuals working in regulated early learning facilities (a summary is found in Figure 2 on the following page). Over three quarters of the workforce is employed in certified child care centers, 14% in large home-based and 9% in small home-based facilities and each has different licensing requirements, including completion of required preparation and professional learning as shown to the right.

## Key facts about the ECE Workforce

- 30% of the entire workforce identify as persons of color. In terms of language diversity, 34% of small home, 15% of large home, and 12% of center providers reported a primary language other than English.
- Although 42% of the workforce in regulated facilities engaged in at least one professional development initiative in 2018, the percent of providers with a Bachelor’s degree or higher ranges from 36% in centers down to only 11% for small home providers.
- The attrition rate for the workforce is approximately 25% annually. The Center also reported a dismal picture of retention. At a facility-level, in the average center, 75% of teachers were at their center for more than one year in 2018. About half of centers (48%) retained 75% or more of their head teachers and teachers for over a year. Low levels of stability (less than 25% of teachers retained) was an issue for 10% of facilities in 2018.
- The median number of years providing care remained consistent from 2012 to 2018. Large home-based providers averaged five years of providing care and small home-based providers averaged eight and a half years of providing care in 2018.

### Requirements for Educators Vary Based on Setting and Funding Stream

Lead teachers across all programs are required to pass a background check via the Criminal Background Registry and complete health and safety training

#### Registered Family Child Care *No additional requirements*

**Certified Family Child Care**  
*One year of teaching experience in a related setting;  
One year as a registered family child care provider or equivalent*

**Certified Center Child Care**  
*One year of teaching experience in a related setting;  
20 credits of training at college or university with relevant age group*

**Preschool Promise**  
*Bachelor’s degree or equivalent*

**Oregon Pre-Kindergarten**  
*Bachelor’s degree*

FIGURE 2. EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE INFOGRAPHIC



# OREGON EARLY LEARNING WORKFORCE

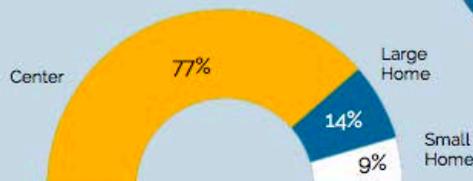
Produced by the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership

## 2018

The early learning workforce includes individuals working directly with children and families\* in regulated child care and education facilities. The knowledge and skills of the workforce shape the learning and development of young children and support families. It is important to identify and describe these individuals.

### CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

**24,203**  
people worked in Oregon regulated early learning facilities in 2018.



This represents an overall increase of 3,330 individuals since 2012. Small home-based care has decreased by 36% over the past 7 years.

**24%** of the 2017 workforce left the field before 2018

### DEMOGRAPHICS

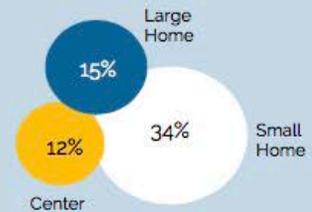
#### RACIAL/ETHNIC DIVERSITY

Percent of workforce identifying as a person of color



#### LANGUAGE DIVERSITY

Percent of workforce reporting a primary language other than English



### COMPENSATION AND TRAINING



#### MEDIAN WAGE

For teachers/head teachers in center based care



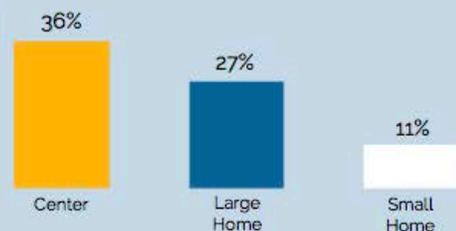
#### CONTINUING EDUCATION

Average total hours spent in community-based continuing education training

**42%** of the workforce engaged in at least 1 professional development initiative\*\*

### EDUCATION

Percent of Workforce with Bachelor's Degree or Higher



\*Workforce positions included: Aide I, Aide II, Assistant I, Assistant II, Director, Head Teacher, Provider, Site Directors/Supervisor, and Teacher

\*\*Professional development initiatives include participating in the Oregon Registry Online (Step) or receiving Oregon Education Awards and Scholarships.

Full report can be found at <https://health.oregonstate.edu/early-learners/workforce>  
For more information contact [oregonCCRP@oregonstate.edu](mailto:oregonCCRP@oregonstate.edu)



**Oregon State University**

Given the negative impacts of instability and turnover of the early learning workforce on children, recruitment and a professional learning system, the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership examines measures of turnover and stability for both individual child care workforce members and facility level. The reported turnover rates have remained fairly stable since 2012, with percentages of the number of individuals leaving the workforce ranging from 20% for the 2012 workforce to 24% for the 2017 workforce. Unfortunately, the percentage of individuals entering the workforce each year has fallen from 29% in 2013 to 21% in 2018; thus, pointing to the need for incentives and policies both attracting individuals to the field AND retaining them. Furthermore, OSU reported only 26% of the 20,873 individuals who entered the 2012 workforce remained in the workforce in 2018.

As should be expected, retention varies by position with head teachers and directors in centers the most likely to stay in the workforce (34%) compared to teachers (25%), site directors (17%), and aides (17%). Fifty-four percent of large home-based providers and 35% of small home-based providers have remained in the workforce since 2012. The least likely positions to stay in the workforce were center aide I and large home-based assistant I positions with only 11% and 10% of the 2012 cohort staying in the workforce for all seven years. As to be expected, engagement in professional learning initiatives varied by how stable a person was in the workforce. Of the 2012 cohort, those who remained in the workforce (“stayers”) had the highest percentage of participation in professional initiatives (71% participating in at least one initiative), compared to those who were in and out (59%) or had left the workforce (28%).

Looking at each type of professional engagement separately, a similar pattern is found. Those who stayed in the workforce were more likely to have been engaged in professional learning compared to those who were in and out or had left the workforce. For example, 70% of “stayers” were enrolled in the registry, compared to only 26% of “leavers.” A similar pattern is seen for those receiving Education Awards and Scholarships, as shown in Table A.

TABLE A. ENGAGEMENT WITH PROFESSIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

<b>Professional Engagement, 2012-2018</b>	<b>“Leavers”</b> N = 14,094		<b>“In and Out”</b> N = 1,293		<b>“Stayers”</b> N = 5,486	
	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Enrolled in the Registry <sup>a</sup>	3,711	<b>26%</b>	745	<b>58%</b>	3,814	<b>70%</b>
Received one or more Education Awards	3,064	<b>22%</b>	591	<b>46%</b>	3,391	<b>62%</b>
Received one or more Statewide Scholarships	1,089	<b>8%</b>	213	<b>16%</b>	1,296	<b>24%</b>

<sup>a</sup> Persons were considered enrolled in the Registry when they applied for, documented competency, and were awarded a Step. This does not include those that were automatically assigned a Step 1 or 2.

Based on the 2018 median lowest and highest wage, teachers in Oregon's early learning and child care settings make an average of \$25,000 to \$35,400 annually. Like many states, Oregon's requirements and policies are driven by funding streams that can have impacts on the support and compensation for the early learning workforce. In comparison, an analysis completed for the launching of Oregon's Preschool Promise program found the average kindergarten teacher wage in Oregon ranged from \$48,000 to \$63,000 in 2016 (Mandell & Bachtel, 2016).

## Best Practice in ECE Workforce and Organizing Framework

Improving policies and practices for the early care and education workforce has been central to conversations in the early childhood field for decades. The issue continues to gain momentum as multiple national organizations lead conversations around best practice in creating policies toward improving the ECE workforce.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is [leading an effort to define the United States’ early childhood profession](#) by establishing a unifying framework for career pathways, knowledge, and competencies, qualifications, standards, and compensation. One of the intended uses of this work is to support states in developing, enhancing, and implementing policies to achieve an integrated, high-quality and equitable professional learning system for all early childhood education professionals working with and on behalf of young children birth through age 8. They note:

*The absence of a unified and agreed upon scope of practice, competencies, career pathways and nomenclature defining early childhood education professionals across states and settings has limited our collective impact for too long, stifling the case for increased professional recognition and compensation parity.*

Multiple national organizations have proposed policies and frameworks for state early childhood professional learning systems. For example, [NAEYC recommends](#) states focus on six policy areas to help states achieve the recruitment and retention of a skilled cadre of effective, diverse, and fairly compensated early learning professionals: professional standards, career pathways, articulation, advisory structures, data, and financing. Similarly, the [Center for the Study of Child Care Employment at the University of California, Berkeley suggests](#) five essential elements: compensation, work environments, financial resources, workforce data, and qualifications. As this report focuses primarily on the professional learning – or the ongoing acquisition of skills and knowledge – the ELD is utilizing a framework derived from research and practice:

**Organizing Framework for Oregon’s Professional Learning Investment**

<b>Recruitment and Respect</b>	Structures and supports to attract people to the profession of early learning, especially educators that represent the racial/ethnic and linguistic diversity of Oregon’s young children, as well as recognize the ECE workforce as professionals
<b>Preparation, Degrees, and Credentials</b>	Accessible, culturally- and linguistically-responsive credential and degree programs to prepare educators to work with young children
<b>Professional Learning</b>	Ongoing, community-based training and job-embedded learning opportunities rooted in competencies.
<b>Retention</b>	Workplace environments, and foundational conditions, such as knowledgeable, skilled leadership that supports a diversity of ECE educators in implementing effective practice

This organizing framework informed the methodology for completing this report and informs the structure of the proposed budget. In addition, this framework guided questions asked to stakeholders.

## Oregon Early Learning Division's Current Investments

In 2012 and 2011, respectively, the Early Learning Division (ELD) and Early Learning Council were launched with a focus on child care, early learning programs and cross systems integration, policy and research, and equity. These functions include leading the state's professional learning system for birth-to-five educators.

The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), a block grant administered by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, is the primary support for the Early Learning Division's current work in professional learning. CCDF requires states to spend at least 9% of their award on quality initiatives and 3% of funds to improve the quality of infant and toddler care. The ELD utilizes philanthropic funding to support professional learning and will use Preschool Development Grant Birth-to-Five Renewal Grant funds to support additional professional learning infrastructure and supports.

Oregon's initiatives in professional development can be found throughout the report, but below is an explanation of some of the key elements of Oregon's system:

### Child Care Resource & Referral Entities (CCR&Rs)

There are 13 Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) entities in Oregon with services to promote the health, safety and development of young children in childcare settings as part of Oregon's Early Learning System. Their primary purpose and expertise is to recruit, train, and promote retention of a high quality, diverse Early Learning and Child Care Workforce by providing professional development using a relationship-based approach that includes supports, assistance with navigating the system, coaching and consultation. CCR&Rs collaborate with partners to prioritize supports for Early Educators serving children furthest from opportunity including family and center-based child care, license-exempt care, preschools, Head Start and Early Head Start, family support, home visitors, early intervention, as well as public and private schools. The Research Institute (TRI) at Western Oregon University maintains the central coordination function for all R&Rs.

Although their work spans well beyond educators, they are primary deliverers of professional development and trainings for providers, including how to start a child care business. Staff at the CCR&Rs offer a wealth of consultation free to programs on professional development and coaching, sustainable business practices, and critical topics like building partnerships with families, implementing curriculum, and dealing with challenging behaviors. They also help support child care/early learning programs understand and apply for Spark. They provide training or contract with a variety of trainers who are paid on an hourly basis, helping individuals become Community or Master Trainers through the Oregon Center for Career Development. As such the

CCR&Rs are often able to identify trainers who mirror the demographics of the communities they are serving, and their partnerships and collaboration with community colleges create a seamless pathway for continued professional development and higher education to meet the needs of our early learning workforce.

The CCR&Rs also convene and facilitate focused child care networks with child care providers to increase the supply of high quality child care. Focused child care networks are particularly well suited to create linguistically- and culturally-specific supports and are staffed by Quality Improvement Specialists who reflect a local cohort of child care providers. The Quality Improvement Specialists individualize professional development and coaching to meet the needs of the cohort and each cohort spends about two years in the network. This relationship-based model of professional development has proven to be a highly effective strategy for providing childcare providers with education, training and support in achieving a higher quality rating in the statewide Spark program.

### Early Learning Hubs

Oregon's sixteen Early Learning Hubs are charged with bringing together a local community's childcare, health and education efforts to focus on supporting children and their families. This coordinated approach allows for each of the sectors to be more cohesive in preparing children, particularly the most vulnerable, to be successful in kindergarten and beyond. They encourage partners such as the business sector, early care and education, k-12 and health care representatives to come to the table and help support and strengthen efforts to build the supply of high quality, diverse early learning programs that meet the needs of community families. The Early Learning Hubs also support the workforce through the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Program (KPI) funds widely used by the CCR&Rs.

### Oregon Registry Online

In 2012, the ELD funded the implementation the Oregon Registry. The Oregon Registry is a database to which all staff working in regulated child care facilities must submit documentation of completion of required annual training and education. ELD contracts with the Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD) at Portland State University to host and maintain the Oregon Registry. Each of these new areas are contributing to the overall health of the early education workforce as identified in the descriptions following.

### Spark

Spark helps improve the quality of early care and education in Oregon by recognizing, rewarding and building on what early learning and development programs are already doing well. Spark offers:

- Consultation, professional development and resources to help early learning and care programs provide developmentally appropriate experiences and to continuously improve the quality of the care they provide to young children and their families.
- Information on program quality families can use to inform their choice of early learning and care programs.
- Eligible quality rated programs receive a monthly bonus payment on top of their DHS reimbursement rates; eligible families have a reduced co-pay.

## Philanthropic Investments

Oregon’s ECE professional learning system benefits significantly from investments from philanthropic partners. Examples of these investments are included below:

### Growing Master Trainers

Typically, individuals who provide training for early care and education professionals are predominantly white and/or English speaking. Too often trainings made available to Early Childhood Educators are not yet been sufficiently offered through a diversity of cultural lenses. Early learning professionals whose first language is not English often then required to gain knowledge, understanding and skills through an interpreter or second language. In response to this situation, the Early Childhood Funders Learning Circle (ECFLC), funded the Growing Master Trainers project. The goal of the project, housed at the Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education, is to increase the number of Master Trainers from priority populations, e.g. Communities of Color, Linguistically Diverse Communities, and rural areas , and to increase access to more complex training, e.g. Step 2 and 3 for priority populations across the state. The \$1.3 million investment built a potential model for change which would increase accessibility to training and education for the entire early learning workforce.

OCCD has pulled together organizations who serve children and families who speak languages other than English and from Oregon’s rural communities to create a Community Council to help identify strategies to remove barriers in the Oregon Registry and its training that are preventing individuals from becoming Master Trainers. The system change is already resulting in an increased number of trainers preparing to deliver high level trainings.

## Southern Oregon and Central Oregon Early Learning Professional Development Consortia

Oregon has had two successful efforts to ensure early learning professionals, particularly those from minority racial and ethnic groups and individuals who speak English as a second language are offered supports proven to help students succeed. With thanks to the Early Learning Professional Development Consortium grant funded by Oregon Department of Education's Network of Quality Teaching and Learning, two consortia in Southern Oregon and Central Oregon have implemented strategies to connect the Early Learning Workforce with college credentials, degrees and certificates.

The Consortia were awarded grants in 2014-15 for a total of \$400,000 to 8 post-secondary institutions partnering with 12 CBOs, 4 ESDs, 3 EL Hubs, 1 RAC and 1 Tribe with one consortium in Central Oregon serving Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties and a consortium in Southern Oregon serving Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine, Klamath and Lake counties.

Additional funding from the Ford Family Foundation extended the Southern Oregon Early Learning Professional Development Consortium for an additional three years (January 1, 2018- December 31, 2020).

Identified goals for the Consortia were two-fold:

- Develop and provide higher education pathways for early care and education professionals to obtain credits, certificates and degrees in Early Childhood Education.
- Ensure flexibility in meeting the needs of the existing early learning workforce and provide a comprehensive array of supports to these Career-to-College students in completing their degrees.

Best practices emerging from the two Consortia include:

- Navigation Coaches/Peer Mentors
- Scholarships, stipends, waived fees to include books, technology, etc.
- Collaboration among partners
- Cohort models based on relationship-based professional learning
- Electronic Portfolios articulated across colleges for smooth transfers

## CONSORTIA RESULTS

**426** participants increased a step on the Oregon Registry Online

**168** programs achieved a Star Rating in Spark

Participants earned **3089** cumulative credits

**76** participants completed certificates

**31** participants completed degrees

- Specific ECE advising and academic counseling
- Face to face orientation for online instruction
- Southern Oregon University weekend traveling workshops
- Classes offered in home communities, home languages, career to college times (flexible class schedules on nights and weekends)
- Dual Credit ECE coursework in High School

## Betty Gray Community College Scholarship

Since 2003, the Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) has provided needed financial support for community college students through the Betty Gray Community College Scholarship program. OCF awards grants to 13 of Oregon's 17 community colleges. The scholarship is the only statewide source of financial assistance for study of Early Childhood Education in a post-secondary institution. Approximately 1,272 unduplicated students received Betty Gray scholarships between 2004 and 2019. Statewide, approximately 30 students completed an ECE certificate or Associates degree with the assistance of the Betty Gray Community College Scholarship in the 2018-19 academic year.

The colleges are afforded flexibility by OCF to create scholarship programs to meet the needs of their local community. Annual award scholarships range in size from \$100 to \$4,000 and can be used for tuition, textbooks and other needs such as emergency expenses and costs of substitutes if a student employed in the field must take time off to complete a practicum.

OCF has issued over \$600,000 (\$612,500) in scholarship grants to Oregon community colleges since the 2017-18 academic year. On average, Betty Gray Community College Scholarship grants total approximately \$150,000/year. OCF anticipated an increased number of returning ECE students in the 2019-20 academic year and increased its grant-making to \$162,500 in response.

In a 2013 OCF evaluation report<sup>1</sup>, the authors reported almost two-thirds of scholarship recipients were first in their family to attend college and a quarter identified as racially/ethnically diverse. Some colleges limit funds to only full-time students, an issue of grave concern to a vast majority of those who are employed and can only attend college on a part-time basis.

---

<sup>1</sup> Weber, R.B., Grobe, D. Lipscomb, S.T. (2013) Betty Gray Community College Scholarship Program Evaluation. Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, Oregon State University. <https://health.oregonstate.edu/sites/health.oregonstate.edu/files/occrp/pdf/betty-gray-community-college-scholarship-program-evaluation-report-10-23-2013.pdf>

Findings from the evaluation showed:

- Requiring a GPA of some level as a requirement appears to increase the likelihood a student will complete a certificate or degree.
- Allowing scholarship funds to be used for a wide array of purposes allows students to reduce the specific barrier interfering with educational attainment.
- Having a goal for scholarship recipients to earn a certificate or degree in ECE provides a foundation for other practices designed to support educational attainment. What seems essential is the program having a clear goal to which it holds itself accountable.
- Requiring successful completion of some ECE credits appears to increase the likelihood a student will complete a certificate or degree.

## Methodology

This legislative report builds on national research and successful examples from other states and within Oregon illustrating what works effectively to support the profession. But more important, this reports highlights recommendations and imperatives identified from the field including: early learning instructors from a range of delivery models in Oregon, early learning staff in the Early Learning Division, Oregon’s Early Learning Hubs, Child Care Resource & Referral entities, coaches, higher education faculty, and trainers, early learning advocates, philanthropists, community leaders, legislators, researchers and early childhood advocates. Over 70 interviews were conducted and a full listing of the interviewees can be found in Appendix A. Most interviews were one-on-one and lasted for an hour. Open-ended questions were used to start the interview process focused on:

- Supporting professional learning and credentialing for early educators in Oregon
- Creating effective and equitable access to professional learning and career advancement for early educators and
- Elevating services and supports for the early learning profession

Individuals were encouraged to expand and add any other related perspectives and recommendations. Detailed notes were taken and assurances provided to interviewees: no comment or recommendation would be attributed to a specific individual. A subsequent analysis of the transcripts was conducted with recommendations synthesized and consolidated into recommendations for the purposes of this report. Some recommendations can help guide and inform decisions made for 2020 legislative investments, some can guide programs and services within the state, while others may require further study and amplification for the 2021 legislative session.

The report also builds upon feedback from the Early Learning Council and the Educator Advancement Council, as well as the results of eight ELD-hosted listening sessions with over 100 head teachers, teachers, and aides in child care centers. These results were analyzed along with results of listening sessions with Early Childhood educators of color conducted by the National Association for the Education of Children Under Six and needs, gaps and priorities identified by immigrant and refugee families through listening sessions conducted by the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization in Partnership with Social Venture Partners.

Some of the recommendations in this report are achievable within the current biennium and are intended to help guide the use of legislatively earmarked funds within the Student Success Act, while other recommendations set the stage for longer-term conversations and tough decisions on policy and practices affecting the next five years of the profession. To achieve the goals outlined will require thoughtful balancing of

current needs in the field with desired attributes and recognition of an early childhood workforce that looks and acts like a profession , albeit a profession offering the lowest wage compensation and benefits of any other field. Full implementation of the ideas presented will require changes in current practices, structures, and resources historically useful but requiring a reset to meet and advance practitioners as professionals. It requires the attention of multiple sectors including business and industry, K-12 education, community colleges and four year universities as well as community-based organizations, philanthropy, unions and professional associations.

Oregon is certainly not the only state needing to improve its ability to support the individuals providing quality early learning from birth through age five. However, historic improvements have been achieved in states like New Jersey, Illinois, North Carolina, Louisiana, Washington, Michigan, and Pennsylvania to provide increased support for the early childhood workforce and examples from these states were considered in determining the final recommendations and spending plan.

## Stakeholder Recommendations

Across interviews and throughout the educator listening sessions, stakeholders had numerous recommendations for creating a professional learning system that meets the needs of educators and results in better outcomes for children and families. These recommendations have been consolidated into the four categories utilized as the organizing framework for this report and for the professional learning budget. In addition, a fifth category regarding equity and the diversity of the ECE workforce was added as this was a significant point of conversation throughout interviews and a guiding principle in the work of the Early Learning Division. The recommendations are contextualized using the problems identified by stakeholders, with particular emphasis on those raised by educators across Oregon.

### Ensuring an Equitable Professional Learning System that Maintains and Enhances the Diversity of the Workforce

The state’s early learning system must work for Oregon’s ECE educators of color and ECE educators within federally recognized tribes. As NAEYC notes in their equity position statement:

*“If district, state, and federal policies impose new educational requirements without addressing systemic inequities (including revising current structures and supports, and financing these changes), they will—without question—deepen existing divisions along racial, geographic, socioeconomic, and linguistic lines.”*

Interviewees reflected this commitment, recommending the following:

#### **What Interviewees Recommended Regarding Equity and Diversity**

- Value the language and cultural assets Oregon’s second language professionals offer to the profession, understanding many will only offer their services in their native language.
- Fund coursework and credentials, ensuring educators do not need to pay out of pocket for ongoing training.
- Support the creation and offering of coursework leading to Early Learning credentials for Spanish speaking professionals.
- Include families in the development and instructor training on bilingual curriculum incorporating cultural stories and traditions and encourage interested family members to consider a career pathway in early childhood.

- Support tribal educators to offer language immersion programming to preserve their tribal language and cultural identity.
- Seek to staff classrooms or preschool groups with representatives from communities served starting with volunteers (relatives and retirees) who may decide to enter the profession.
- Tap into the Oregon Bi-literacy Seal to reach high school students who may be interested in careers in early childhood education.
- Build upon the Educator Advancement Council’s plan for Section 48 of the Student Success Act and invite Early Learning professionals to participate in planned Communities of Practice focused on achieving consistent racially affirming environments across and between Educator Preparation Providers and P12 systems. The goals of the Communities of Practice model are to develop environments affirming diverse educators’ race/ethnicity and culture in which educators of color are (a) able to be their authentic selves, (b) feel empowered as instructional leaders and pedagogical experts, and (c) see their own values mirrored in the values of their schools.
- Continue the efforts underway with the Growing Master Trainer initiative at OCCD to diversify Oregon’s corps of trainers who mirror the demographics, culture, and wisdom of underrepresented communities. Continue studying how best to partner with Sponsoring Organizations to support more diverse trainers and use the results of the evaluation to refine and improve the program.

## Recruitment and Respect

Stakeholders noted several issues related to the category of recruitment and respect. Many early childhood teachers expressed concerns about the lack of respect they experience as teachers in their workplace and community, expressing that they did not think their job was well understood or valued by families, neighbors, etc. In addition, stakeholders in higher education noted that enrollment within programs, a proxy for interest in entering early childhood education, has dropped significantly in the past several years.

Interviewees recommended the following regarding attracting educators to the field and respecting and honoring their commitment once they begin:

### **What Interviewees Recommended Regarding Recruitment and Respect**

- Enhance the TeachinOregon website to also include educators who teach children prior to Kindergarten entry
- Build public knowledge and understanding of SSA early learning account investments:
  - Develop communications regarding the pressing need to grow the early childhood workforce and urgency of increasing overall compensation for educators, inclusive of a pathway toward parity with K-12
  - Document and share the impacts of Oregon’s EL investments on children and their success in entering kindergarten.

## Preparation, Credentials, and Degrees

Stakeholders raised a number of concerns about the accessibility of degrees and credentials, citing financial barriers to entry due to low compensation in the field, as well as barriers because of language. Teachers reported they did not believe degree attainment would lead to better compensation, pointing to a need to better connect the two. There were also expressions for clear needs for alternative pathways to credentials, including pathways that are more practice-based, such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in high school or apprenticeship programs.

Interviewees had numerous ideas to support the workforce through formal education programs:

### What Interviewees Recommended Regarding Preparation, Credentials, and Degrees

- Issue grants to launch CTE programs in prioritized Oregon child care deserts enrolling high school students interested in the profession and providing early work experience and college level coursework.
- In year one, explore use of apprenticeship models to help new and aspiring child care providers earn while learning and business incubator programs support directors with “back of the house” business operations.
- Conduct a feasibility study regarding a centralized Early Learning Advising site to help individuals learn about opportunities and steps they can take to further their professional status (e.g. from HS graduation to teaching assistant, teacher to director, teacher to trainer, etc.
- Adapt and adopt NAEYC competencies for Oregon’s early educators, transitioning Oregon’s Registry Career Lattice from Core Knowledge Categories to NAEYC Competencies.
- Fund additional scholarships and stipends beyond the Betty Gray scholarship and the Family Childcare Scholarships.
- Ensure scholarships can also support costs affiliated with training beyond registration fees and tuition (fees, textbooks, subs, transportation, child care, technology, etc.)
- Ensure scholarship policies prioritize the needs of part-time students –some will never be able to attend college full-time, as they are already working in the field.
- Structure scholarship resources to be available upfront rather than as a reimbursement.
- Hire a bilingual navigator to:
  - Support the applications process,

- Link students to resources and employment, and
- Track completion and employment status.
- Increase availability of – higher education classes, including more evenings and weekends to support working students, predictable schedules, social and academic networking, and navigators or peer mentors.
- Attend to students for whom English is a Second Language by:
  - Increasing use and availability of Vocational English as a Second Language to support learning.
  - Hiring more bilingual instructors and trainers, offering both general education and ECE classes in Spanish in more locations, providing co-teaching models using paid former graduates, transcription and translation features available through online learning platforms.
  - Investigating need and opportunities to offer training in additional languages.
- Revamp the Grand Articulation Summit to include Community College and university leaders and structure a review and update process for training and course transfer into degrees (Fusion charts).
- Develop a short and long term priority gaps list and provide grants to develop needed higher education linked coursework offered through a range of delivery systems.
- Launch and fund a voluntary college course sharing process to fill more seats, shorten time delays due to course availability, and increase access to college coursework (requires faculty and administrator work group and coordinator to schedule and promote course offerings).

## Professional Learning

Educators in particular expressed a need for better and more accessible professional learning and for Oregon to expand its definition as what “counts” as professional learning (e.g., job-embedded experiences). Educators expressed concern that they were not able to count many valuable professional learning experiences toward required hours. In addition, most early childhood teachers are responsible for seeking out and paying for all costs associated with their professional development and advancement.

Interviewees provided the following ideas for supporting a competency-based professional learning system that supports ongoing learning and is accessible to educators:

### What Interviewees Recommended Regarding Professional Learning

- Use competencies as the basis for designing portable and stackable credentials.
- Move away from “seat time only” measures for earning steps in the Oregon Registry and expediently phase-in competency-based and job-embedded approaches
- Reinstate the Early Learning Education Awards, leveraging them to increase the offerings of competency-driven professional learning.
- Review and evaluate the Oregon Registry approval process for training and trainers and PD offerings examining impacts on key metrics and recommendations for continuous improvement.
- Provide planning grants for CCR&Rs and key stakeholders to assess readiness and local needs for additional professional development consortiums
- Provide seed funding to pilot up to six additional professional development consortiums involving CCR&Rs, Early Learning Hubs, child care providers, family child care unions, K-12 LEAs, Community Based Organizations, 2 and 4-yr colleges/universities, health and business related organizations, and municipalities.
- Expand the privately funded Growing Master Trainers pilot, promote to culturally- and linguistically-specific organizations and rural/remote communities, and fund sponsoring organizations to develop a pool of culturally responsive trainers.
- Provide organizational supports to Community Based Organizations to grow capacity statewide for more master trainers.
- Develop Professional Learning coursework for working K-3 principals on critical early learning pedagogy and developmentally appropriate practices.

- Provide public funding for Oregon’s two existing privately consortiums with sufficient resources to provide mentoring and coaching to six newly formed consortia.

## Retention

Stakeholders expressed concerns with the high rate of turnover in the field – approximately 25% of ECE educators leave the field each year. Center-based teachers spoke to the role of administrators in creating conditions that lead to or prevent turnover. Stakeholders also emphasized the role compensation plays in retention.

Interviewees suggested the following ideas for retention of educators:

### **What Interviewees Recommended Regarding Retention**

- Create a voluntary, competency-based TSPC license for early learning teachers and directors, similar to that for the Oregon Registry of Charter School teachers and administrators.
- Document and spread effective practices related to professional development consortiums through the centralized coordination arm of the CCR&Rs or other entity designated by ELD.
- Collect data and user feedback to ensure all state-funded workforce development programs are outcome-driven and accountable for achieving high-quality standards.

## Spending Proposal

As a result of recommendations from stakeholders, as well as best practice within early learning professional development systems and practices, the ELD proposes the following as a plan for allocating the \$12.5 million provided by the Student Success Act.

The following budget proposes approximately 4.9% for operating costs and 95.1% for funds to go to the field to develop and support professional learning. This includes a request for one position for the Higher Education Coordination Commission, a Program Analyst 2 to manage scholarship administration; it also includes two positions within the Early Learning Division: a Higher Education and Credential Specialist (OPA4), with expertise in early childhood professional learning, program implementation, and administrative policy and rule, as well as a staff focused on supporting design of professional learning and subsequent assessment and support systems (PA4).

The majority of funding will go toward expanding the successful work of existing partners, though the ELD proposes to use money regarding preparation strategies and professional learning to partner with and cultivate capacity within higher education, school districts, and culturally-specific partners to train the workforce. The majority of the funding in the first year of implementation will go toward professional learning strategies, including developing competencies and robust, high-quality experiences for current educators to gain new knowledge and skills that are critical to serving young children.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EARLY LEARNING PROFESSIONALS		
Recruitment Strategies	Update the TeachinOregon website to enhance statewide communication.	\$110,000
	Create a marketing campaign to increase early childhood educators in the state.	
Preparation Strategies	Provide education scholarships for future early childhood educators.	\$3,915,000
	Adapt current higher education programs and GED pathways for early childhood educators.	
	Expand CTE in Public Schools for careers in early childhood education.	

	Research and design apprenticeship models for Oregon's early childhood educator workforce.	
Professional Learning Strategies	Adopt and adapt competencies that build effective skills for early childhood educators.	\$6,830,449
	Develop and deliver competency-based, high quality professional learning for early childhood educators.	
	Provide targeted technical assistance for early childhood leaders.	
	Expand early childhood consortia approach through Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) organizations.	
	Design career pathways with educators to revise Oregon Registry Online.	
	Provider quarterly CCR&R trainings.	
Retention Strategies	Provide education awards to provide incentive for current educators to continue to grow within the field.	\$1,035,000
	Develop approach to ongoing advisement to current workforce.	
<b>TOTAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EARLY LEARNING PROFESSIONALS</b>		<b>\$11,890,449</b>
<b>OPERATIONS</b>		
Staffing Cost	Provide budget for 3 positions (2.26FTE) for the purposes of administering programs and ensuring fidelity to the proposed plan. Includes one position to be deployed to the Higher Education Coordinating Commission.	\$484,551
Evaluation Cost	Provide professional service to develop tool to monitor and evaluate the progress of investments in meeting targeted outcomes.	\$50,000
Communication	Provide support in enhancing communication through the Early Learning Division website in providing information to the field.	\$75,000
<b>TOTAL OPERATIONS</b>		<b>\$609,551</b>

## APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

*All interviews were conducted by Dr. Hilda Rosselli, who also authored the report with recommendations to the Early Learning Division*

Daniel	Anderson	Blue Mountain Community College
Juan	Baez-Arevalo	Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Kristi	Baker	Consultant
Andi	Bales	Oregon Early Learning Division
Dana	Bleakney Huebsch	Oregon Early Learning Division
Angie	Blackwell	Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Patricia	Blasco	The Research Institute
Joan	Blough	Oregon Early Learning Division
Yolanda	Buenafe	Mt Hood Community College
Katy	Brooks	Bend Chamber of Commerce
Colette	Brown	Providence Wee Care
Peter	Buckley	Southern Oregon RAC
Miriam	Calderon	Oregon Early Learning Division
Brooke	Chilton-Timmons	Sun Service System
Brenda	Comini	High Desert Early Learning Hub
Christy	Cox	Ford Family Foundation
Patrick	Crane	Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Pamela	Deardorff	Oregon Center for Career Development
Veronica	Dujon	Higher Education Coordinating Commission
Heather	Freillinger	Umqua Community College
Shadiin	Garcia	Educator Advancement Council
Patrick	Gihring	Work Systems
Don	Grotting	Beaverton School District
Sally	Guyon	Umqua Community College
Bridget	Hatfield	Oregon State University
Dana	Hepper	Stand for Children
Amy	Howell	Central Oregon EL PD Consortium
Karen	Humelbaugh	Community Colleges & Workforce Development
Bruce	Kauss	Blue Mountain Community College
Alissa	Keny-Guyer	Oregon Legislator
Anne	Kubisch	Ford Family Foundation
John	Lively	Oregon Legislator
Robyn	Lopez-Melton	The Research Institute
Marvin	Lynn	Portland State University
Margaret	Mahoney	Oregon Department of Education

Debbie	Mathias	National Consultant
Heidi	McGowen	Consultant
Maureen	McGrath	Umatilla Morrow Head Start
Susan	McLain	Oregon Legislator
Mary Louise	McLintock	Oregon Community Foundation
Margie	McNabb	Early Learning Division
George	Mendoza	La Grande School District
Eileen	Micke-Johnson	Southern Oregon EL PD Program
Ashley	Mickels	Columbia Gorge Community College
Sara	Mickelson	Oregon Early Learning Division
Sara	Myers	Oregon Center for Career Development
Tomo	Neilson	Oregon Center for Career Development
Brooke	Nova	Hillsboro School District
Gabby	Nunley	Oregon Department of Education
Soobin	Oh	Children's Institute
Nancey	Patten	Columbia Gorge CCR&R
Roni	Pham	Oregon Early Learning Division
Ashley	Pierson	Education Northwest
Karen	Prow	CCR&R-Crook, Jefferson, Deschutes
Jon	Reeves	Early Learning Division
Martha	Richards	Miller Foundation
Maidie	Rosengarden	Southwest Oregon Community College
Anthony	Rosilez	Teacher Standards & Practices Commission
Trish	Rousell	Inclusive Child Care
Ruby	Ramirez	Oregon Community Foundation
Jada	Rupley	Clackamas Education School District
Tammy	Short	Blue Mountain Community College
Steve	Simms	Bureau of Labor and Industry
Kelly	Skopil	Columbia Willamette YMCA
Janeen	Sollman	Oregon Legislator
Julia	Steinberger	Community Colleges & Workforce Development
Dawn	Taylor	Early Learning Division
Carmen	Urbina	Oregon Department of Education
Christine	Waters	Multnomah CCR&R
Bobbie	Weber	Oregon State University
Sara	Wright	Oregon State University
Mary	Wolf	Southern Oregon Early Learning PD Program
Sunyoung	Yoon	Education Northwest