



Oregon's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan

**Strategies to
Equip Young
Children for
School, Work
and Life**

Developed in
collaboration with the
State Early Childhood Team



Oregon's Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan was developed in collaboration with the State Early Childhood Team, a partnership of



**Oregon
Department
of Education**



— and —

EC Cares

**Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior,
University of Oregon**

**Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood
Care and Early Education**

Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Oregon Child Development Coalition

**Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special
Healthcare Needs**

Oregon Commission for Childcare

Oregon Head Start Association

Yamhill Family and Youth Programs

(Please see the full list of partners on pages 24 and 25)

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Executive Summary



Strategies to Equip Young Children for School, Work and Life



November 2006

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A Call to Action...

“The time has come... to shape a shared agenda to ensure both a rewarding childhood and a promising future for all children.... The charge to society is to blend the skepticism of a scientist, the passion of an advocate, the pragmatism of a policy maker, the creativity of a practitioner, and the devotion of a parent – and to use existing knowledge to ensure both a decent quality of life for all of our children and a productive future for the nation.”

***—From Neurons
to Neighborhoods:
The Science of Early
Childhood Development¹***

Oregon's Early Childhood Systems Plan promotes a shared agenda. It includes a framework and menu of strategies that families, caregivers, providers, agencies, organizations, businesses, philanthropists, communities and policy makers can choose from to promote early childhood development and a promising future for Oregon children.

We urge all Oregonians concerned about young children to join with dozens of partners throughout the state in using this important Plan to help transform the vision of thriving children into a reality.



Overview

A Vision for Young Children in Oregon

Envision an Oregon in which young children are healthy, safe and thriving, in nurturing families and caring communities, with the services, supports, resources, and relationships they need to reach their full potential.

A Plan to Achieve the Vision

This vision is achievable, and the first steps have already been taken. Over the past two years, the work of many partners, and information about effective and promising practices, have been brought together into a strategic statewide Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to create and sustain a statewide early childhood system that supports families and communities in raising children who are healthy, safe, and ready to learn.

Now it is time to take the next step: to carry out the Plan through an ever widening network of public and private partners, in order to equip Oregon's young children – its future citizens and workforce – for school, work and life.

A plan to sustain thriving children, nurturing families, and caring communities

The Importance of Early Childhood

Healthy early childhood development helps prepare children for school, work, relationships and life. Clear and compelling evidence from arenas as diverse as brain research and economic analysis confirms that high quality early childhood development experiences yield tremendous benefits -- not just for individual children and families served, but also for communities, the general public and the economy.

For every dollar invested in quality early childhood services, many more are returned to the public, leading researchers at the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis to conclude that “we are unaware of any other economic development effort that has such a public return.”²

The Need for a Comprehensive System

Oregon’s “early childhood system” consists of the wide array of services, supports, and resources -- both formal and informal, public and private – that contribute to the growth, development, treatment and well-being of young children aged 0 – 8 and their families. It includes the following five essential service and support elements and the system infrastructure needed to sustain, coordinate and improve them:

- ◆ Health
- ◆ Mental Health and Social-Emotional Development
- ◆ Early Care and Education
- ◆ Parent Education
- ◆ Family Support

Partners with diverse missions, mandates, and resources are essential parts of the early childhood system, and many have worked collaboratively for more than a decade to strengthen the system and assure the well-being and learning readiness of our young children and families. Improvements are evident in services, in the system, and in results for children and families at both the state and local levels.

But still, our young children’s health and well-being languish, and our early childhood system remains underfunded and incomplete, with gaps in infrastructure and in service and support capacity.



124 babies
are born
in Oregon
every day.

Every day
in Oregon,
a child dies
before his
or her first
birthday.

Improvements are evident...

- ◆ Oregon has the lowest percentage of low birth weight babies in the nation
- ◆ Oregon ranks first in the country in breastfeeding initiation
- ◆ 80% of children in Oregon enter kindergarten ready to learn
- ◆ Every county has an early childhood team and a comprehensive community plan
- ◆ Family partnerships are increasing in all parts of the early childhood system
- ◆ There is bipartisan and gubernatorial support for improving young children's health and readiness to learn
- ◆ There is growing awareness of the importance of promoting social-emotional development and early childhood mental health in all early childhood settings
- ◆ The public and private sectors are exploring new ways to work together on early childhood issues
- ◆ State partners show renewed commitment to working across agency lines to improve shared outcomes for young children and their families



But our children's health and well-being are still of deep concern...

- ◆ Every 57 minutes a child in Oregon is abused or neglected³
- ◆ Every hour, a child in Oregon is born into poverty⁴
- ◆ Every day, a child dies before his or her first birthday⁵
- ◆ Every two weeks, a child is killed by gunfire⁶
- ◆ 20% of children entering kindergarten are not ready for school⁷
- ◆ Children in Oregon suffer from hunger, food insecurity, parental methamphetamine use and unemployment at rates that have been among the highest in the nation
- ◆ 117,000 children in Oregon have no health insurance⁸
- ◆ 16% of Oregon's young children do not have a personal doctor or nurse⁹
- ◆ 6% of parents of children aged 0-3, and 8% of parents of children aged 4-5, report having concerns about their children's mental health¹⁰
- ◆ 23% of Oregon's young children aged 0-6 live in families whose income is below the federal poverty level¹¹
- ◆ While over 1/3 of Oregon's children aged birth to 5 are in paid early care and education settings, the demand for early childhood care and education, and the need for quality care, exceeds the supply¹²

And our early childhood system needs:

- ◆ Clear priorities and a system-wide agenda
- ◆ Stronger and enduring linkages between key partners
- ◆ Stable and sufficient funding for effective statewide services and supports
- ◆ A full and coordinated service and support continuum that includes promotion, prevention, early intervention, treatment, follow-up and maintenance services
- ◆ A well trained, adequately compensated, culturally responsive and stable work force
- ◆ Ways to measure how well children and families are doing, and how well services are meeting their needs



A plan that
builds a
“system of
systems”

Benefits of a Comprehensive Systems Plan

Oregon’s Early Childhood Systems Plan provides some of the cohesiveness to help fill gaps, remedy fragmentation, and build the “system of systems” Oregon needs to promote young children’s health, development, and readiness for school, work and life. The plan:

- ◆ Articulates a shared vision for Oregon’s young children and families
- ◆ Unifies diverse early childhood efforts within a common framework
- ◆ Increases awareness of what is needed to have a truly comprehensive system
- ◆ Validates and builds on existing effective infrastructure, services and supports
- ◆ Supports systems and policy development at State, community and service delivery levels
- ◆ Infuses the current system with additional evidence-based and promising practices
- ◆ Encourages closer alignment of policies and resources among diverse partners
- ◆ Promotes coordination and integration of services and supports
- ◆ Confirms the need for both new and existing partnerships

Ways to use the Plan

The Plan is a tool you and your partners can use to:

- ◆ Determine how your current early childhood efforts fit into a shared framework
- ◆ Further the work you are already doing to improve outcomes for young children
- ◆ Set shared priorities for moving the early childhood agenda forward
- ◆ Choose additional effective strategies to incorporate into your work
- ◆ Strengthen existing partnerships and collaborations around a specific agenda
- ◆ Establish new strategic partnerships to implement specific strategies
- ◆ Guide policy development and align policies and services with other early childhood partners
- ◆ Guide decisions about the allocation of resources
- ◆ Identify new opportunities and strategies for improving the early childhood system

The Strategic Plan:

Background of the Plan

Oregon's Early Childhood Systems Plan was developed through a strategic two-year process that engaged numerous and diverse stakeholders -- organizations, agencies, and individuals -- throughout the state. The Plan builds on previous work and existing strengths, and promotes the combined efforts of parents and multiple partners to achieve positive outcomes for young children and their families.

Desired Outcomes

The Early Childhood Systems Plan was developed with specific child and family outcomes clearly in mind. They are imbedded in our vision, and they include crucial Oregon benchmarks as well as previously endorsed shared outcomes that reflect the goals of Oregon's legislatively supported early childhood system. The Plan is designed to facilitate the following outcomes:

Children are healthy, safe and thriving

- ◆ More children will show appropriate patterns of growth and development
- ◆ More Oregonians, including children, will have access to affordable health insurance
- ◆ More two-year-olds will be adequately immunized
- ◆ More parents and children will have access to alcohol/drug treatment and mental health services
- ◆ Fewer infants will have mothers who used alcohol and/or tobacco during pregnancy
- ◆ More women will access early prenatal care
- ◆ More pregnant women with chemical dependency issues will access treatment
- ◆ The number of quality child care settings will increase
- ◆ The rate of child abuse and neglect in Oregon will decline
- ◆ Fewer children will need to be removed from their homes
- ◆ Infant mortality rates will drop

Children live in nurturing families and caring communities

- ◆ Families will gain increased skills in parenting their children
- ◆ More parents will read to their children regularly

Children have services, supports, resources, and relationships needed to reach their full potential

- ◆ Quality child care will be available and accessible for more families who need it
- ◆ A greater number of children with identified conditions and special needs will receive appropriate services in community-based settings
- ◆ More children with special needs will receive care appropriate to their needs
- ◆ A greater percentage of children will enter school ready to learn

A plan
designed
with specific
outcomes
in mind

Improving infrastructure will produce a stronger, more effective early childhood system and better outcomes for young children and their families

Overview of the Plan: Priorities and Essential Elements

Two basic priorities emerged from the strategic planning process:

- ◆ The need for infrastructure development, and
- ◆ The need for improved capacity in all five essential service and support elements of Oregon's early childhood system.

The essential elements of the early childhood system include:

Infrastructure: The mechanisms that support, assure and coordinate the essential elements. These include governance, leadership, funding streams, policies and procedures, family involvement, data systems, laws, quality standards and regulations, performance and outcome measurement, training and professional development, workforce capacity, and cultural proficiency.

Health: The services and supports that help people achieve and/or maintain a state of physical, mental and social well-being, and that help people manage chronic conditions and recover from illness. The health element includes access to insurance and to healthcare within a "medical home" - a continuous source of comprehensive and coordinated care that is compassionate, family-centered, readily accessible and culturally responsive. Comprehensive care includes medical, dental and behavioral health care as well as wellness promotion, prevention and developmental services, and acute, chronic and specialty care.

Mental Health and Social/Emotional Development: Services and supports that promote, preserve, remediate, or restore the emotional, psychological, social and behavioral well-being of young children and their families and facilitate early childhood mental health, which is defined as "the developing capacity of the child from birth to age 5 to experience, regulate and express emotions; form close and secure interpersonal relationships; explore the environment, and learn."⁹

Early Care and Education: Services and supports that promote learning, school readiness and social competence by providing safe, nurturing and developmentally appropriate early education and care that addresses cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.

Family Support: Formal and informal services and resources that address risks and stressors that might impair families' abilities to nurture and support the healthy development of their children.

Parent Education: Services and supports that impart specific information, knowledge, relationship-building and child-rearing skills to parents and other caregivers, with the objectives of enhancing children's health and development and facilitating meaningful relationships.



Implementing the Plan: Shared objectives and a menu of strategies

On the following pages, you will find the Plan's framework. Its over arching priorities, shared objectives, and robust yet flexible menu of strategies are designed to promote an early childhood system responsive to the needs of all of Oregon's young children and their families.

On pages 10 and 11 you will find a list of the essential elements for the priority areas of Infrastructure Development and Service and Support Capacity, and the shared objectives partners have identified to strengthen them.

On pages 12 through 22, you will find a menu of strategies to help achieve the shared objectives.

The Plan is not meant to be prescriptive. Rather, it is designed to be a living, breathing document; outcomes, objectives and strategies can be completed, added, and/or modified as progress continues, and as conditions and circumstances change over time.

PRIORITY 1: INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Essential Elements

Shared Objectives

Collaborative Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen collaborative leadership at State and local levels to guide development and refinement of the early childhood system.• Expand and maintain public/private partnerships to support the early childhood system.
Public Awareness, Will and Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance public awareness of the importance of early childhood.• Promote sustained public & political will to support a comprehensive system of coordinated, effective, high quality early childhood services and supports.
Sustainable Investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Champion adequate and sustainable funding for the early childhood system's infrastructure, services and supports.
Policy & Resource Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elevate early childhood as a statewide policy and resource priority.• Encourage alignment of state and local priorities, policies and resources within and across components of the early childhood system.
Cultural Proficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance statewide capacity to provide culturally and linguistically proficient services and supports that meet the needs of Oregon's increasingly diverse and changing population of young children and families.
Family Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand and maintain family and consumer partnerships in the design, delivery, evaluation and governance of all aspects of the early childhood system.
Shared Accountability for Quality and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support a consistent performance measurement framework for the early childhood system.• Share consistent quality standards across the early childhood system.• Promote increased system-wide use of evidence-based practices.
Workforce Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote the development and retention of a professional, culturally proficient and developmentally informed workforce across all early childhood services and supports.

PRIORITY 2: SERVICE & SUPPORT CAPACITY

Essential Elements

Shared Objectives

Comprehensive Continuum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Enhance the provision of a comprehensive, coordinated continuum of high quality, effective and affordable early childhood services and supports.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support universal comprehensive insurance and healthcare for expectant parents, young children and their families to cover the medical, dental, vision, hearing, mental/behavioral, and specialty healthcare services they need.• Promote “medical homes” (sources of continuous, comprehensive, coordinated, family-centered and compassionate care) to meet the healthcare needs of all young children and their families.
Social/Emotional Development and Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote social-emotional development and mental health in all early childhood settings.• Strengthen system capacity to provide social/emotional and mental/behavioral health services and supports to young children and their families in natural and familiar community-based settings.
Early Care and Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote children’s health, social competence and learning readiness through developmentally appropriate early care and education services.• Enhance the capacity of early care and education to facilitate access to comprehensive services and supports for young children and their families.• Enhance availability of high- quality, develop-mentally appropriate, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early care and education services.
Family Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strengthen and expand policies, services and supports that enhance family stability, safety, self-sufficiency and relationships.
Parent Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote learning and leadership opportunities that enhance parents’ confidence and competence as primary nurturers, first teachers, and partners in early childhood services and supports.• Elevate quality parent education as an integral and universal part of the early childhood system.

Infrastructure
Essential Element: COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen Leadership

Strengthen collaborative leadership at state and local levels to guide development and refinement of the childhood system.

Enhance Partnerships

Expand and maintain public partnerships to support the early childhood system.

Representative Strategies

1. Enhance current early childhood partner collaboration.
2. Strengthen the governance structure of the early childhood system through shared leadership at all levels.
3. Identify and support additional early childhood champions.
4. Enhance collaborative business, philanthropic, advocacy, private agency, faith-based, citizen, and parent/family involvement in the early childhood system.
5. Continue and strengthen collaboration between lead state early childhood agencies and additional early childhood partners.
6. Create and implement collaborative leadership development and training opportunities.

Infrastructure
Essential Element: PUBLIC AWARENESS, WILL, ACTION

OBJECTIVE

Build Awareness

Enhance public awareness of the importance of early childhood.

Promote Public & Political Will

Promote sustained public & political will to support a comprehensive system of coordinated, effective, high quality early childhood services and supports.

Representative Strategies

1. Develop a communication plan for Oregon's Early Childhood agenda that conveys consistent messages about early childhood and the early childhood system of services and supports.
2. Launch strategic public awareness/engagement campaign consistent with communications plan.
3. Link awareness campaign with outreach and funding efforts.
4. Develop mechanisms to map, track, and visually depict the early childhood system to facilitate stakeholder engagement and systems development.

Infrastructure Essential Element: SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENTS

OBJECTIVE

Sustain Adequate Funding

Champion adequate, sustainable funding for the early childhood system's infrastructure, services, and supports.

Representative Strategies

1. Determine the level of financial resources needed to sustain a comprehensive, quality early childhood system.
2. Develop and implement methods to determine and convey levels of unmet early childhood service and funding needs.
3. Complete and maintain an inventory of early childhood funding and funding streams to guide efforts to maximize, leverage, and coordinate financing.
4. Identify potential new funding streams and financing strategies.
5. Promote routine biennial preparation and review of a state level Children's Budget.
6. Use economic impact and cost-benefit analyses to promote public and private investments in early childhood.

Infrastructure Essential Element: POLICY & RESOURCE ALIGNMENT

OBJECTIVE

Make Early Childhood a Priority

Elevate early childhood as a statewide policy and resource priority.

Align Elements Across System

Encourage alignment of state and local priorities, policies and resources within and across components of the early childhood system.

Representative Strategies

1. Build broad stakeholder consensus on early childhood system priorities.
2. Assure that policies, services, and supports are consistent with shared early childhood system priorities, objectives, and outcomes.
3. Develop shared definitions and common language among key early childhood stakeholders.
4. Review (audit) state policies to mutually examine their impact on early childhood well-being and their consistency with early childhood system priorities.
5. Identify and address missing and misaligned policies and resources.
6. Include early childhood and family impact analyses in pertinent new policy development efforts.
7. Analyze relevant legislative bills for impact on the well-being of young children and their families.
8. Enhance and maintain interagency awareness and understanding of the structures, functions, mandates, and services of early childhood partners.
9. Encourage ongoing review and coordination of all key state plans to identify common goals and objectives.

Infrastructure

Essential Element: CULTURAL PROFICIENCY

OBJECTIVE

Improve Cultural & Linguistic Proficiency

Enhance statewide capacity to provide culturally and linguistically proficient services and supports that meet the needs of Oregon's increasingly diverse and changing population of young children and families.

Representative Strategies

1. Promote policies, practices, and services to eliminate resource, service, and health disparities, and achieve equal access for young children and their families.
2. Integrate cultural proficiency standards into all aspects and components of the early childhood system, including governance, administration, service delivery, recruitment, training, professional development, and evaluation.
3. Systematically review demographic trends to insure ongoing responsiveness to cultural, linguistic, and other diversity needs.
4. Expand the early childhood focus and involvement of state level cultural diversity committees, plans, and initiatives.
5. Promote the periodic administration and analysis of cultural self-assessments at provider, program, organizational, and systems levels.
6. Recruit and retain an early childhood workforce that reflects the diversity of the population it serves.
7. Enhance the cross-cultural effectiveness of people who work with young children and their families.
8. Enhance the availability and utilization of qualified interpreters and translators.
9. Enhance the availability and utilization of cultural specialists, cultural consultants, and traditional healers.
10. Engage family consultants who reflect the diversity of the early childhood population.
11. Develop and implement common performance measures and indicators of cultural, linguistic, and other diversity proficiency in the early childhood system.
12. Develop mechanisms to identify, track, and disseminate information about culturally proficient services and supports.

Infrastructure

Essential Element: FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

OBJECTIVE

Expand Partnerships in All Aspects of the System

Expand and maintain family and consumer partnerships in the design, delivery, evaluation, and governance of all aspects of the early childhood system.

Representative Strategies

1. Identify and implement additional family involvement opportunities in all levels and components of the early childhood system.
2. Create and sustain positions for parent consultants/family liaisons in state and local early childhood services and in system governance and oversight structures.
3. Develop mechanisms to compensate families for involvement.
4. Develop and implement family orientation and training protocols and processes.
5. Provide technical assistance, consultation, and training to early childhood system partners to improve recruitment, orientation, training, and retention of families as partners.
6. Invite and support families to participate in designing, presenting, and attending early childhood trainings.
7. Incorporate and implement family involvement requirements in quality standards, regulations, contracts, and policies.
8. Sponsor periodic community forums to inform and seek input from families.
9. Routinely utilize consumer satisfaction surveys to guide improvements in early childhood services and supports.
10. Engage family and consumer organizations and coalitions in identifying and implementing strategies to strengthen early childhood system infrastructure, services, and supports.

Infrastructure

Essential Element: SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR QUALITY AND OUTCOME

OBJECTIVE

Support Consistent Measurement

Support consistent performance measurement framework for the early childhood system.

Enhance Consistency Across System

Share consistent quality standards across the early childhood system.

Promote Evidence-Based Practices

Promote increased system-wide use of evidence-based practices.

Representative Strategies

1. Review, confirm, and prioritize shared outcomes for the early childhood system.
2. Create shared outcome measures to evaluate overall infrastructure and system development progress.
3. Develop coordinated state and local capacity and mechanisms to collect, analyze, report on, and utilize early childhood outcome data within and across components and levels of the early childhood system.
4. Determine baselines, targets, and data sources for shared outcomes.
5. Consider incorporating National School Readiness Indicators Project indicators into Oregon's early childhood measurement system.
6. Develop mechanisms to identify, disseminate, and track the use of evidence-based practices throughout the early childhood system.
7. Promote fidelity to evidence-based practices.
8. Evaluate the impact of cross-training and professional development efforts.

Infrastructure Essential Element: WORKFORCE CAPACITY

OBJECTIVE

Develop A Professional, Culturally Proficient Workforce

Promote the development and retention of a professional, culturally proficient, and developmentally informed workforce across all early childhood services and supports.

Representative Strategies

1. Identify core knowledge and skill competencies needed by all providers who touch the lives of young children and families.
2. Incorporate core competency training into cross-system, component-specific, and specialty discipline pre-service, professional development, and continuing education offerings.
3. Strengthen and expand early childhood training opportunities across disciplines, based on mapping of needs and opportunities.
4. Promote the implementation of minimum qualifications and standards for early childhood providers whose disciplines do not currently offer licensing or credentialing.
5. Develop a cross-agency early childhood training plan.
6. Promote supports and incentives to encourage professional development (including but not limited to articulation, transfers, tiered reimbursement, and tuition subsidies).
7. Develop mechanisms to recruit and retain sufficient numbers of providers to meet community needs (including but not limited to early childhood dental and mental health providers).
8. Improve telemedicine capacity to compensate for rural provider shortages.
9. Develop mechanisms to identify and disseminate evidence-based practice information to providers throughout the system.
10. Support livable wages and adequate benefits for the early childhood workforce.

Capacity Essential Element: HEALTH

OBJECTIVE

Support Universal Health Insurance and Healthcare

Support universal comprehensive insurance and healthcare for expectant parents, young children, and their families to cover the medical, dental, vision, hearing, mental/behavioral, and specialty healthcare services they need.

Promote Medical Homes

Promote “medical homes” (sources of continuous, comprehensive, coordinated, family-centered, and compassionate care) to meet the healthcare needs of all young children and their families.

Representative Strategies

1. Strengthen early childhood system linkages with healthcare coverage initiatives.
2. Enhance outreach efforts to increase enrollment in public and private health insurance programs.
3. Promote health insurance portability to assure continuity of care.
4. Maximize third party reimbursement for developmental screening, assessment, promotion and prevention services, and care coordination.
5. Maximize understanding and use of current benefits and services to meet healthcare needs.
6. Promote a coordinated system of evidence-based, universal screening, referral, and follow-up services across the multiple settings that serve young children and their families.
7. Promote the use of standardized developmental and psychosocial screening tools as routine components of well-child check ups and community services.
8. Facilitate system-wide training in the use of standardized screening tools.
9. Develop and disseminate customized sample toolkits to facilitate standardized screening, anticipatory guidance, and fidelity to medical home principles in primary care and community service settings.
10. Train the early childhood workforce to screen and refer for health risks and conditions.
11. Increase the number of healthcare providers participating in the Oregon Health Plan.
12. Expand the number of pediatric dental care providers and availability of pediatric oral health services.
13. Expand the role and presence of parents as consultants and decision-makers in healthcare and early childhood settings.
14. Enhance partnerships, service coordination, and information exchange between community services and healthcare providers.
15. Promote the co-location of health care and early childhood services.
16. Promote statewide availability of social/emotional, health, and mental health supports and consultation in early care and education and other early childhood settings.
17. Promote physical activity and healthy nutrition in all early childhood settings.
18. Expand and sustain the availability of health services and supports in school-based settings.
19. Expand telemedicine capacity for physical and behavioral health in rural areas.
20. Promote the use of integrated electronic health records.
21. Improve ancillary services (e.g., transportation) to improve healthcare access and utilization.
22. Support incentives to recruit and retain healthcare providers for medically underserved populations and geographic regions.
23. Review existing eligibility and enrollment policies and procedures and promote those that improve healthcare affordability, accessibility, and availability.

Capacity
**Essential Element: SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AND MENTAL HEALTH**

OBJECTIVE

**Promote Social Emotional
Development in Early Childhood
Settings**

Promote social-emotional development and mental health in all early childhood settings.

**Strengthen Mental Health System
Capacity**

Strengthen the capacity to provide social/emotional and mental/behavioral health services and supports to young children and their families in natural and familiar community-based settings.

Representative Strategies

1. Develop and implement a research-based social marketing campaign emphasizing the importance of early childhood social/emotional development and mental health.
2. Enhance public, provider, and family awareness of the neurodevelopmental and psychosocial risks and consequences of prenatal drug and alcohol exposure and parental substance abuse.
3. Support core competencies across disciplines to promote healthy social/emotional development.
4. Train the multidisciplinary early childhood workforce in the core competencies that promote social/emotional development and mental health.
5. Promote use of standardized screening and assessment tools by providers trained to use them.
6. Develop, maintain, and disseminate a list of standardized early childhood social-emotional development and mental health screening tools.
7. Train the multidisciplinary early childhood workforce to screen and refer for early childhood mental health, challenging behaviors and family behavioral health issues.
8. Increase the number of behavioral health providers serving young children and families.
9. Promote the development of core competencies needed for providing early childhood mental/behavioral health services.
10. Develop and implement in-service training, continuing education, and reflective supervision opportunities to assist behavioral health providers in increasing capacity to serve young children.
11. Promote the routine inclusion of coursework in early childhood development and family behavioral health in high school, college, graduate, specialty programs, and professional development curricula.
12. Expand social/emotional, health, and mental health supports and consultation in early care and education, primary care, parent education, family support, and other early childhood settings.
13. Enhance coordination between early childhood mental health and pediatric healthcare providers.
14. Develop statewide mechanisms to support communities in implementing universal screening, referral, and follow-up services for young children and their families.
15. Promote universal screening and early treatment for maternal (prenatal and postpartum) depression and other parental mental health conditions, and services for their children as well.
16. Promote third-party coverage and reimbursement of clinically and developmentally appropriate early childhood mental health diagnosis and treatment services.
17. Expand availability of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug information and referral, prevention, and intervention services for prospective and expectant parents and families with young children.
18. Enhance the availability of mental health services to young children and their families who are experiencing homelessness, domestic violence, foster care placement, and/or other involvement in the child welfare system.

Capacity Essential Element: EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

OBJECTIVE

Promote Social Competence and School Readiness

Promote children's health, social competence and learning readiness through developmentally appropriate early care and education services.

Enhance Capacity

Enhance the capacity of early care and education to facilitate access to comprehensive services and supports for young children and their families.

Enhance Availability

Enhance availability of high-quality, developmentally appropriate, affordable, accessible, and inclusive early care and education services.

Representative Strategies

1. Promote quality early care and education as an economic development strategy.
2. Promote quality improvement efforts and initiatives in early care and education.
3. Enhance licensing, monitoring, and regulation to improve service quality.
4. Stabilize and professionalize the early care and education workforce by expanding systems that promote adequate compensation and benefits.
5. Support a professional development system for early care and education providers that includes incentives for career preparation and ongoing professional development.
6. Support the development of provider networks to reduce isolation, connect to community resources, and improve quality.
7. Support Head Start Performance Standards as a model framework for a universal system.
8. Promote the effective development, dissemination and implementation of comprehensive research-based early learning guidelines to guide educational approaches, curriculum selection, and outcome assessments in all early childhood settings.
9. Develop methods to assess and summarize children's progress in early care and education settings and utilize findings to improve service delivery and inform policy decisions.
10. Enhance family involvement in early care and education settings.
11. Support efforts to further integrate health and safety standards into early care and education settings.
12. Facilitate smooth and planned transitions between home, school, and all levels of early care and learning.
13. Promote universal preschool opportunities.
14. Support the expansion of full- and extended-day kindergarten.
15. Support expansion of extended-day and out-of-school-time early care and education.
16. Develop mechanisms to increase child care capacity for underserved populations and communities including infants and toddlers, and rural areas.
17. Promote early literacy in all early care and education settings through increased training and support.
18. Strengthen early care and education settings as venues for parent education and family support.
19. Strengthen linkages between healthcare and early care and education providers.
20. Increase the enrollment of eligible children in Oregon Prekindergarten/Head Start.
21. Sustain and expand the availability of social/emotional, health, and mental health supports and consultation in early care and education settings.
22. Enhance early care and education capacity to serve children who experience homelessness, domestic violence, foster home placement, and/or other involvement in the child welfare system.
23. Enhance early care and education resource and referral capacity for children with special healthcare needs.
24. Promote the inclusion of children with special needs in early care and education and out-of-school-time settings.
25. Increase screening, identification, and enrollment of eligible children in early intervention services.
26. Expand the provision of early intervention and early childhood special education services in natural settings including child care settings.
27. Promote collaboration between and among early childhood special education, child care, and Head Start through joint planning, training and implementation of evidence-based practices.

Capacity

Essential Element: FAMILY SUPPORT

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen & Expand

Strengthen and expand policies, services, and supports that enhance family stability, safety, self-sufficiency, and relationships.

Representative Strategies

1. Create statewide infrastructure for promoting and coordinating family support policies and services.
2. Promote and maintain wage, unemployment, and tax structures that assure a stable and sufficient standard of living for families with young children.
3. Promote policies and services that support families in spending time together during critical periods and challenging events.
4. Support adequate parental leave and flexible schedule policies for families with young children.
5. Strengthen policies, services, and supports that promote the active involvement of both parents in the lives of their children.
6. Support the establishment of a statewide information and resource help line for families.
7. Promote a universal application process to facilitate streamlined and simultaneous enrollment in multiple services.
8. Promote parent-to-parent outreach and support opportunities.
9. Support community efforts to establish systems for universal screening and subsequent referral to indicated early childhood services and supports.
10. Strengthen and replicate successful local integrated service delivery models.
11. Strengthen the provision of evidence-based home visiting services.
12. Expand community and employer-based breastfeeding support.
13. Support early childhood providers in offering breastfeeding education and support.
14. Assure that emergency preparedness plans and policies address the unique needs of young children and their families.
15. Sustain and expand the availability of injury prevention and environmental hazard reduction information and resources to families of young children.
16. Enhance the availability of care coordination services for young children and families who need them.
17. Strengthen cross-system support of children and families served by the child welfare system.
18. Enhance multidisciplinary understanding and response to drug-endangered children.
19. Enhance the availability of affordable, high quality respite care for children with special needs.

Capacity Essential Element: PARENT EDUCATION

OBJECTIVE

Promote Learning and Leadership

Promote learning and leadership opportunities that enhance parents' confidence and competence as primary nurturers, first teachers, and partners in early childhood services and supports.

Elevate Quality

Elevate quality parent education as an integral and universal part of the early childhood system.

Representative Strategies

1. Support the systematic provision of evidence-based information, materials, resources, and learning opportunities that assist parents in understanding and meeting their children's social, emotional, developmental, cognitive, physical, and healthcare needs.
2. Enhance the availability of parent education opportunities for families of all young children.
3. Expand parent education opportunities for fathers, grandparents, foster parents, teen parents, parents of children with special needs, and vulnerable populations.
4. Embed parent education opportunities in natural and familiar community settings (including, but not limited to, libraries, park and recreation settings, community centers, faith communities, schools, and work places).
5. Strengthen community capacity to plan and promote the coordination of parent education with other early childhood services.
6. Orient and train the early childhood workforce to understand and promote parent education activities.
7. Support referral to and provision of parent education in current early childhood service and support venues including but not limited to health and mental health care, early care and education, child welfare, self-sufficiency, home visiting, and other family support services.
8. Support the development and implementation of a timely, comprehensive, publicly accessible directory of parent education resources.
9. Strengthen information and referral capacity to assist parents in accessing parenting information and resources.
10. Promote dissemination of evidence-based parent education curricula, materials and programs to providers and parents.
11. Develop standards for parent education and core competencies for parent educators.
12. Support training and professional development for parent educators.
13. Promote development of a statewide parent educator network.
14. Infuse parenting and child development content into non-traditional training settings such as baby-sitting training, high school classes, recreation and safety staff training, adult literacy and education programs.
15. Support peer mentoring, coaching, and advocacy opportunities for parents.
16. Host periodic community forums and conferences for parents to share information on parenting and child development.

Endnotes

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Early Childhood System Partners

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 Office of Multicultural Health
 Office of Public Health Preparedness
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