

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Mission Statement and Statutory Authority

The Department of Early Learning and Care's (DELC) mission is to foster coordinated, culturally appropriate, and family-centered services that recognize and respect the strengths and needs of all children, families and early learning and care professionals.

The agency's vision is that all children, families, early learning and care professionals and communities are supported and empowered to thrive.

DELC's work is guided by the following values:

- **EQUITY:** We are committed to dismantling the systems of oppression that harm and create disparities for communities who are historically and institutionally excluded. We are adopting anti-racist principles, expanding access to services, and ensuring community representation and shared power in agency efforts. We are fostering a culturally responsive environment in which all individuals can experience a sense of belonging as they access programs, services, and resources.
- **RESPECT:** We believe that family is a child's first teacher. We are committed to nurturing family partnerships built on mutual respect. We recognize and value the knowledge and experiences of families, early care and education professionals, and community partners.
- **TRUST:** We value the public's trust through honesty, transparency, and keeping our commitments.
- **RELATIONSHIPS:** We acknowledge the importance of nurturing relationships in the field and with community. We listen to, support, collaborate with, and celebrate the professionals, families, and children in our communities.
- **SAFETY:** We put safety and well-being first for our children, families, and early learning and care professionals.
- **CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT:** We set goals, seek input from community, and use data to improve quality of service and programs, increase quality and efficiency, and drive innovation.
- **INTEGRITY:** We are accountable for our actions, decisions, and our work to reliably achieve high-quality outcomes.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Department of Early Learning and Care receives its statutory authority from Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) Chapter 329A and ORS 326.325 - 326.435, 329.160 - 329.425, 336.101, 336.104, and 417.705 - 417.795. The agency, via the Early Learning Council, promulgates rules in Chapter 414 of the Oregon Administrative Code.

Agency Strategic Business Plan

In June, 2024, the Department of Early Learning and Care released its first strategic plan, [Growing Oregon Together](#), along with the agency's [DEI Action Plan](#). *Growing Oregon Together* is a five-year plan that seeks to be both ambitious and achievable. It was built off the work that led to the creation of DELC, as well as the latest edition of [Raise Up Oregon](#), the statewide early childhood system plan developed by the Early Learning Council. In addition, DELC received input from over 200 staff and more than 700 community partners in developing this plan.

Growing Oregon Together is organized around six goals:

- **ACCESS:** All families have access to high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate) and affordable early learning and care that meets their needs.
- **TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY:** DELC honors and recognizes the sovereignty of the nine federally recognized Tribal Nations within Oregon and ensures strong government-to-government relationships to benefit Tribal communities.
- **INFANTS & TODDLERS:** All families with infants and toddlers are supported through early learning and care programs that recognize and meet their unique needs.
- **WORKFORCE:** The early learning and child care workforce is diverse, culturally responsive, highly qualified, and well compensated.
- **RELATIONSHIPS:** DELC deepens community engagement and empowerment, sustains partnerships, and communicates effectively.
- **FOUNDATIONS:** DELC develops and improves operational foundations to efficiently serve Oregonians.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Under each of the six goals, DELC has identified specific objectives and strategies it will operationalize over the next five years to achieve *Growing Oregon Together*. In order to ensure that the plan is both ambitious and achievable, DELC identified a balance of strategies that could be completed with existing resource and capacity, as well as long-term strategies that require additional resources. DELC also analyzed the plan to make sure that work was reasonably distributed over the next five years, with work on some strategies already underway, some starting during the second and third years of the plan, and others commencing in the final two.

Growing Oregon Together also starts with a recognition that DELC cannot do this work alone. This work happens in a complex ecosystem that involves scores of partners whose critical effort, creativity, and commitment to positive outcomes for those engaged in early learning and care cannot be understated. DELC depends on, and embraces, many vibrant, caring partners, such as afterschool programs, child care centers, Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, culturally specific service organizations, Head Start and Early Head Start, Early Learning Hubs, family child care homes, home visiting programs, infant and early childhood mental health consultants, preschool programs, relief nurseries, trainers, and others who work in communities throughout the state. These partners reflect the rich diversity of the early childhood workforce and Oregon's families, and they are grounded in Oregon's communities, rural or urban.

2025-27 Legislative and Budget Priorities

While *Growing Oregon Together* outlines six goals for DELC to address over the next five years, the Agency will prioritize two of these goals to support the early learning and child care sector in the 2025-27 biennium:

1. **Foundations:** Ensure the sustainable operations of the new Department of Early Learning and Care to provide necessary infrastructure for early learning and child care.
2. **Access:** Ensure children and families have access to the resources and supports to foster a love of reading and promote literacy in the early years.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Foundations: As a new agency, DELC has had to develop new functions and services to best serve children, families, and providers across the state. As the Agency concludes its first year of operations, more information has become available regarding the level of staffing necessary to provide strong customer service to the Oregonians who receive agency services. This includes operational staff to manage state resources, hire staff, and assess the quality of publicly funded programs, as well as capacity to ensure sufficient monitoring and safety of licensed child care programs. DELC aims to prioritize customer service and strong operations, while operating as leanly as possible. This is why the DELC staffing and operations budget constitutes 9% of the overall ARB. Reinforcing a strong foundation will allow DELC to operate more efficiently in the future, particularly as additional infrastructure and systems launch throughout the 2025-27 biennium.

Access: As DELC continues to promote access to high quality early learning and care settings, it is critical that this includes literacy development in these early years – long before a child walks through the doors of their elementary school. DELC is prioritizing resources to promote early literacy development, by supporting professional development, getting books into the hands of children, and lifting up the long history of culturally-relevant literacy practices in communities.

2025-27 Agency Initiatives

The Department of Early Learning and Care has identified the following initiatives and policy option packages (POPs) for the 2025-27 biennium. These initiatives reflect the following priorities of the Agency:

1. The Department of Early Learning and Care has the operational capacity to support the necessary work of the agency.
2. Families and early childhood educators have the resources they need to promote early literacy from birth through age five.
3. Child Care Licensing has the presence needed to continue to meet federal timelines, monitor for child health and safety in a timely manner, and provide a high level of customer service meeting the compliance needs of licensed child care providers in Oregon.

POP 101 Operational Support - \$5,737,976 General Fund, 15 positions (12.81 FTE)

The purpose of this package is to address workload capacity needs as well as ongoing operating expenses. As DELC continues to stand up its operations there are areas of agency operations where workload and professional services are at capacity and additional resources are needed to continue to support DELC's programs and maintain a high-level of customer service.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

POP 105 CCLD Staffing - \$3,117,635 Federal Funds, 13 positions (12.06 FTE)

The purpose of this POP is to align Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) licensing caseloads within national best practice recommendations and allow the Department to better meet the customer service, language, and compliance needs of licensed child care providers in Oregon.

POP 580 Birth Through Five Literacy - \$24,841,500 General Fund

The Birth Through Five Literacy Plan is intended to increase access to culturally-specific early literacy programs for children from birth to age five, to provide training and coaching for direct service staff in early literacy, and to develop and expand language revitalization efforts by federal recognized Indian Tribes in Oregon.

Criteria for 2025-27 Budget Development:

Building Solid Foundations:

- Will the program support the Agency to be a good steward of public funds?
- Will the program support strong customer service to Oregonians who use Agency services?
- Will the program give the Agency the capacity to promote access to high quality early learning and care, support the workforce, and center Tribal sovereignty?

Promoting Early Literacy Through Access to High Quality Early Learning and Care Settings:

- Will the program center early literacy as a foundational goal?
- Will the program support families and promote early literacy in the home?
- Will the program expand and develop language revitalization efforts by federally recognized Indian Tribes in this state?
- Will the program establish and support culturally-specific parent and child support programs in all parts of the state?
- Will the program provide research-aligned, developmentally appropriate professional training and coaching for direct service staff in early literacy?

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Major Technology Projects and Initiatives

The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) is a new state agency. Accordingly, major Information Technology Project/Investments focus on the migration and implementation of core systems and the development of IT capability and capacity. The DELIC IT Governance Committee has approved an IT Strategic Plan to guide the growth of DELIC IT, and includes these goals:

- Be the Partner of Choice for all Technology Solutions,
- Promote IT Operational Excellence
- Promote Data Excellence,
- Promote IT & Data Governance,
- Identify Sustainable Solutions,
- Employ an Enthusiastic and Adaptable Workforce.

Additionally, the IT Strategic Plan outlines several important IT investments which are planned for the coming years. The most significant projects which are planned for the 2025-27 biennium include the following:

The Provider Management Platform (PMP) will replace legacy technology systems which support the Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) – which migrated from the Oregon Department of Human Services on July 1, 2023 – and Child Care Licensing programs. Necessary to support the intent of HB 3073 (2021), PMP will modernize core systems and processes, streamline ERDC subsidy payments, and enhance service delivery for providers, applicants, and families. The PMP project aligns with the DELIC IT Strategic Plan vision to be "a collaborative and trusted partner providing modern, forward-thinking, and data-driven solutions." Additionally, the PMP project directly supports the DELIC Strategic Plan goal of access, where "all families have access to high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate) and affordable early learning and care that meets their needs."

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten

Program Overview

Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK) is Oregon’s state-funded Head Start and Early Head Start program. All grantees follow the federal Head Start Act and the Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for OPK is to maintain current service level with \$387,843,577 total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$182,418,156	\$205,425,421	\$0	\$387,843,577

Program Description

The Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK) program follows all Early Head Start and Head Start guidelines. It is an early child development and preschool program that offers comprehensive services for families with children, prenatal through age five, whose income is at or below 100% the federal poverty level. Children who are in foster care or are considered houseless are also eligible for OPK services. OPK provides infant, toddler, and preschool programming, with wrap-around services that focus on the whole child: cognitive, developmental, and socio-emotional supports; medical and dental screenings and referrals; nutritional services; mental health services; parent engagement opportunities; and referrals to social service providers for the entire family. All providers must implement a research-based curriculum, and screening and assessment procedures that support individualization and growth in the areas of development described in the *Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework: Ages Birth to Five* and support family engagement in children’s learning and development. A program must deliver developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate learning experiences in language, literacy, mathematics, social and emotional functioning, approaches to learning, science, physical skills, and creative arts. By offering high quality infant, toddler and preschool services that meets the diverse needs of families, the OPK program is aligned with goals of *Raise Up Oregon* and *Growing Oregon Together*.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

For children prenatal to age three, the program provides year-round services, comprehensively and flexibly meeting the needs of individual families as children grow. Program models include center-based services, with home visits at least twice per year, such as:

- Home-based services with weekly home visits to each enrolled child and family;
- Family Child Care services provide care and education to children in a private home setting; and
- Locally-designed options that tailor services and settings to community needs. Most often these models are two days a week in class, with monthly family home visits.

For children ages three to five, the program offers two models for center-based preschool, a part day and a full day model. In program year 2023-2024, approximately 51% of the children participated in the extended duration service model that offers at least 1,080 hours of instruction during over an eight to nine month period. The part day model provides center-based instruction for a minimum of 3.5 hours per day, four or five days a week, for at least 32 weeks over an eight- or nine-month period. At least 10% of the children in the program are children with identified disabilities and receive specialized services from Early Childhood Special Education administered by the Oregon Department of Education.

All families in the program participate in a family partnership agreement with the OPK program. The partnership agreement identifies activities that support family well-being, economic stability, and a child's learning and development, including services and supports for children with disabilities. It also fosters parental confidence and skills that promote the early learning and development of their children. The family identified goals are supported through home visiting, referrals, and parent engagement activities.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

The combined investments, of state Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten and federal Early Head Start/Head Start, serve approximately 11,560 families with preschool age children and 3,250 families with infants and toddlers. Based on the 2022 Census data this is approximately 69 % of eligible preschoolers and only 13% of eligible infants and toddlers. OPK provides the most comprehensive services with variations in program models to meet individual family and child needs. The program has established teacher and teacher assistant salary expectations that support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Performance

State General Fund and Student Success Act Early Learning Account funds have expanded and enhanced OPK services. Based on 2023-24 funded enrollment, it is anticipated that OPK will serve 8,505 children across all program models in program year 2024-25. Based on Region 10 Oregon Head Start Federal Funded Enrollment for 2023-24, an estimated 5,182 additional children and families will be served with federal Early Head Start / Head Start funds in 2024-25.

All 36 Oregon counties have OPK and federal Head Start services, serving approximately 13,687 children and families with state and federal resources, which are distributed directly to programs. Below by fiscal year, is an overview of the state’s investment in Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten services:

Year	Total State Funded Slots	Total Preschool Slots	OPK 3-5 Preschool Part Day	OPK 3-5 Preschool Duration	Prenatal to Three
2013-14	7,245	7,181	7,181		64
2014-15	7,708	7,644	7,644		64
2015-16	7,904	7,840	7,840		64
2016-17	8,202	8,138	8,138		64
2017-18	8,202	8,138	8,138		64
2018-19	8,316	8,252	8,057	195	64
2019-20	8,067	8,003	7,660	343	64
2020-21	8,867	7,731	5,012	2,719	1,136
2021-22	8,329	7,377	2,713	5,004	1,152
2022-23	8,747	7,332	3,598	3,734	1,415
2023-24	8,505	7,070	3,456	3,614	1,435

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

The Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK) program is authorized by ORS 329.175. By Statute, Oregon Prenatal to kindergarten also follows the Head Start act of 1964 and the Federal Head Start Program Performance Standards.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

OPK Prenatal to Kindergarten is funded with General Fund and Other Funds – Early Learning Account.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Preschool Promise

Program Overview

The Preschool Promise program offers free, high-quality preschool to Oregon families with incomes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and children in foster care. Children must be at least three (3) years of age but not older than five (5) years of age, as determined by the date used to determine kindergarten eligibility, to be eligible for Preschool Promise and can participate in the program for up to two (2) years.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Preschool Promise is to maintain current service level with \$199,211,092 total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$42,324,260	\$156,886,832	\$0	\$199,211,092

Program Description

Preschool Promise is a publicly funded, high-quality preschool program for families with incomes at or below 200% FPL. Families are offered a minimum of 900 service hours annually and guaranteed services six (6) hours per day, four (4) days per week. High-quality early care and education access is a proven driver of early childhood success, with decades of research showing that preschool has the ability to impact children and their families during the most sensitive period of brain development. Currently, 38% of eligible children in Oregon lack access to publicly funded preschool statewide, with less than 30% of eligible children having access in many of our densely populated counties along the I-5 corridor.

In alignment with *Growing Oregon Together: Goal 1*, Preschool Promise incorporates a mixed-delivery approach, which recognizes that high-quality early learning experiences can take place in a wide variety of settings, giving families the ability to choose the setting that works best for them and their child. Settings include elementary schools, Head Start programs, Relief Nurseries, licensed centers and home-based child care programs, education service districts, culturally specific programs, and community-based organizations. All programs are expected to adhere to program quality requirements that are associated with positive outcomes for children. Preschool Promise providers receive technical assistance to promote continuous quality improvement.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Effectiveness and quality go hand in hand in preschool programs. Preschool Promise providers must meet certain quality requirements to be eligible to participate in the program. Key components of quality in Preschool Promise include:

- Participation in the quality recognition and improvement system (QRIS), also known as Spark;
- Culturally responsive teaching methods and practices;
- High-quality and culturally responsive family engagement, learning environments, curricula, assessments, and professional development opportunities;
- Health and developmental support for children and families, such as screenings, referrals, and coordination with health care providers;
- Implementation of best practices in outreach, enrollment and programming for diverse cultural and linguistic populations and children who have been historically underserved in preschool programs;
- Collaboration with community programs to ensure families have knowledge of, and are connected to, community resources and supports to meet the needs of children and families; and
- Participation in an ongoing monitoring and program evaluation system that is used for continuous program improvement.

Early Learning Hubs (Hubs) and Child Care Resource and Referral entities (CCR&Rs) play a vital role in the implementation of the Preschool Promise program. Hubs support grantees with the recruitment, eligibility, selection, and placement of children into the program. CCR&R staff provide coaching, technical assistance, and training to grantees in meeting Preschool Promise [quality requirements](#).

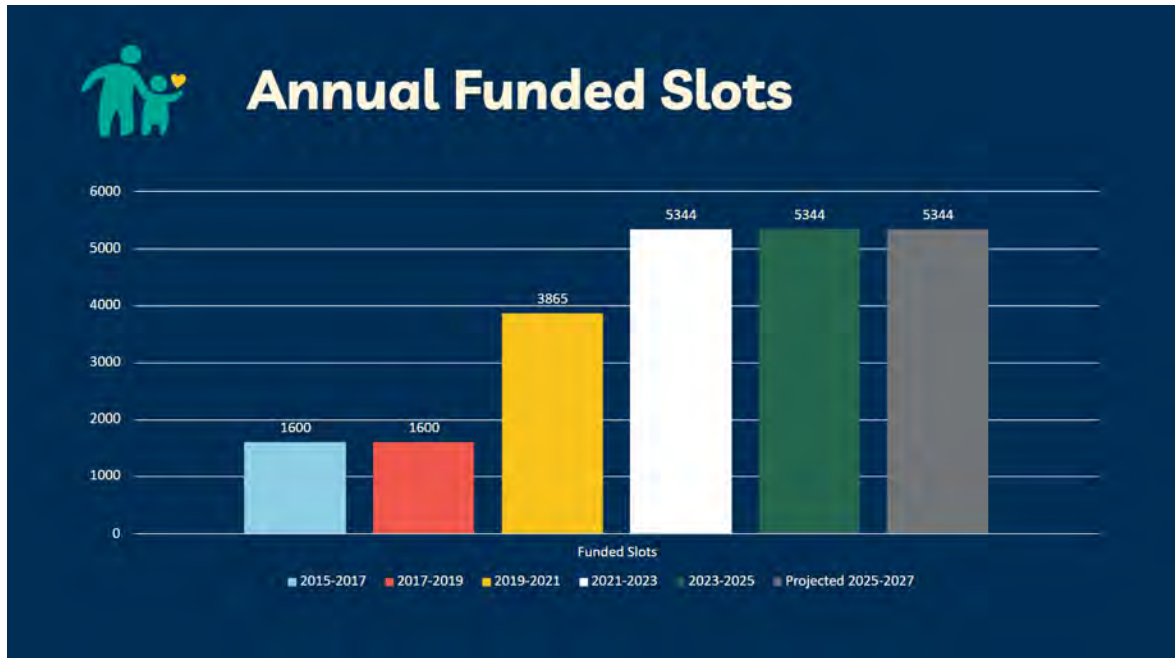
Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Preschool Promise addresses Goal 1 of *Growing Oregon Together* by expanding access to early learning programming that better meets family needs. The 2020 OSU Child Care Desert Report found that there are three children for every available child care slot, with 11 counties meeting the definition of a child care desert. Furthermore, the report found that eight additional counties would be considered child care deserts without publicly funded slots. As a high-quality preschool program, Preschool Promise supports positive child development (cognitive and physical) and ensures a well-compensated, qualified early childhood workforce.

Program Performance

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Since its establishment in 2015, over 5,000 Preschool Promise slots have been funded across the state. The program was expanded in 2020, from a pilot of 1,600 slots, to a statewide program with new investments from the Student Success Act Early Learning Account. Due to the success of the Preschool Promise program and the need for free, high-quality preschool, the program expanded once again in 2022.



Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

ORS 329.172 establishes the Preschool Promise program with the goal of “expanding the availability of high-quality preschool options for children across the state.”

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

Preschool Promise is funded through the General Fund and Other Funds - Early Learning Account.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Baby Promise

Program Overview

Baby Promise is a federally funded, high-quality infant-toddler program for families with incomes at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level. The purpose of the Baby Promise program is to both increase access to high-quality infant-toddler care (6 weeks through 3 years of age) and to enhance quality in existing Early Learning and Care Programs in Oregon through full day, full year care and education. Baby Promise offers funded slots to children of families who are income eligible for the ERDC Program. The Baby Promise program is targeted to serve low-income families in communities struggling to find and keep high-quality care for infants and toddlers. DELC distributes the Baby Promise grant funds to regional organizations or agencies.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Baby Promise is to maintain current service level with \$9,963,150.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$0	\$0	\$9,963,150	\$9,963,150

Program Description

Regional agencies (currently CCR&R's) subcontract with qualified providers to provide Baby Promise slots in programs of all types. Providers must be qualified to accept ERDC payments and are contracted with the CCR&R for 12 months for a regular supplemental payment for each child enrolled in a Baby Promise slot in addition to the families ERDC qualified "voucher" for each month the child is enrolled. Baby Promise incorporates a mixed-delivery approach, which recognizes that high-quality early learning experiences can take place in a wide variety of settings, giving families the ability to choose the setting that works best for them and their child. Qualified providers also provide all necessary supplies for the child (while in care) including diapers, wipes, food, etc.

In addition, Baby Promise program providers engage with a system of Infant-Toddler Specialists (through CCR&Rs) who provide supports and professional development to ensure implementation of quality, relational care. CCR&Rs also assist programs to support inclusion and equity through individualized strategies to help address the needs of all children. CCR&Rs subcontract with Early Learning

BUDGET NARRATIVE

and Care Programs in communities, allowing DELC and the CCR&R to be intentional about building sustainable, quality infant and toddler slots over time, to address the need to reimburse providers for the true cost of high-quality infant and toddler care, and ensure that salary guidelines are implemented. Finally, DELC and the CCR&Rs support programs to meet standards associated with infant and toddler care quality and developmentally appropriate practices that result in high-quality environments and experiences.

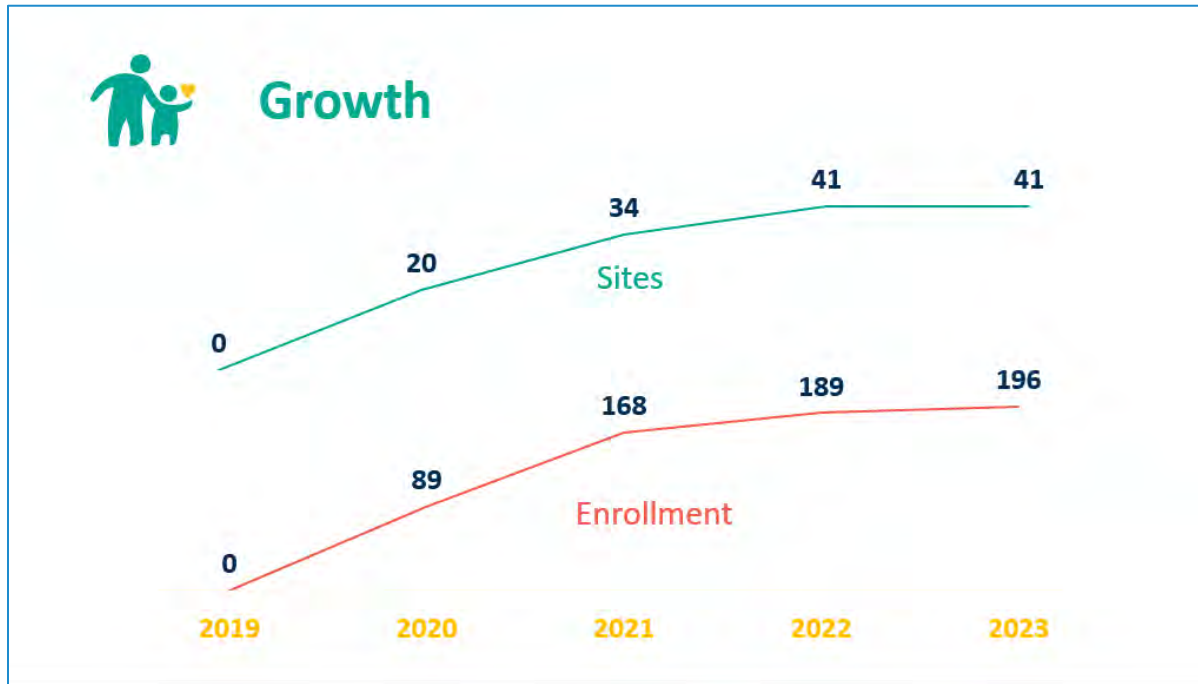
Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Recent research findings by the Oregon Child Care Research Partnership and Oregon State University demonstrate that Oregon remains a child care “desert” for infant and toddler care, with only one child care slot available for every six infants and toddlers across the state. For families with young children, the lack of access is compounded by the cost of care: center-based care for an infant can cost more than in-state college tuition for Oregonians. Baby Promise supports the Agency’s goal to ensure all children are ready for kindergarten by stabilizing and expanding the availability of high-quality infant and toddler care, which is provided during the largest period of brain growth in a child’s development. The subsidized infant and toddler slots within Baby Promise make quality care available to children at a critical developmental age, increasing the likelihood for success in kindergarten and beyond. Additionally, the Agency expects to observe increases in continuity of care for children who participate in Baby Promise programs. Participating providers will attain additional skills and knowledge about practices that promote social, emotional, and cognitive development in infants and toddlers, diversifying and strengthening the skillset of Oregon’s early learning and care workforce.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Performance

Baby Promise has maintained a target number of 250 slots since inception. In the 2023-2025 biennium, the program received funding for maintenance of current enrollment with no additional funds for growth.



Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

The Baby Promise Program is authorized by Statute 417.784 and Rules 414-480-000/414-480-0010/414-480-0015/414-480-0035.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

Baby Promise is funded by Federal Funds through the Federal Child Care Development Block Grant.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Early Childhood Equity Fund

Program Overview

The Early Childhood Equity Fund (ECEF) was created as part of the 2019 Student Success Act and provides grants to support a broad range of culturally specific early learning, early childhood, and parent support programs. The Fund aims to close opportunity gaps for children and families who experience systemic disparities – because of any combination of factors, such as race, income, zip code, or language – by funding early learning services rooted in culture, home language, and lived experience.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for ECEF is to maintain current service level with \$28,195,691 total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$1,804,550	\$26,391,141	\$0	\$28,195,691

Program Description

The Early Childhood Equity Fund provides grants to support a broad range of culturally specific kindergarten readiness and family support programming in early learning and care (ECE) settings. Culturally specific organizations serve a particular cultural community and are primarily staffed and led by members of that community, increasing the ability to create and deliver ECE programming that meaningfully reflects the needs of that community. Programming focuses on promoting positive parent-child interactions and enhancing parenting education, as well as helping children prepare to make the transition to kindergarten. For programs supporting Tribal communities, efforts are made to preserve, revitalize, restore, and maintain Tribal languages.

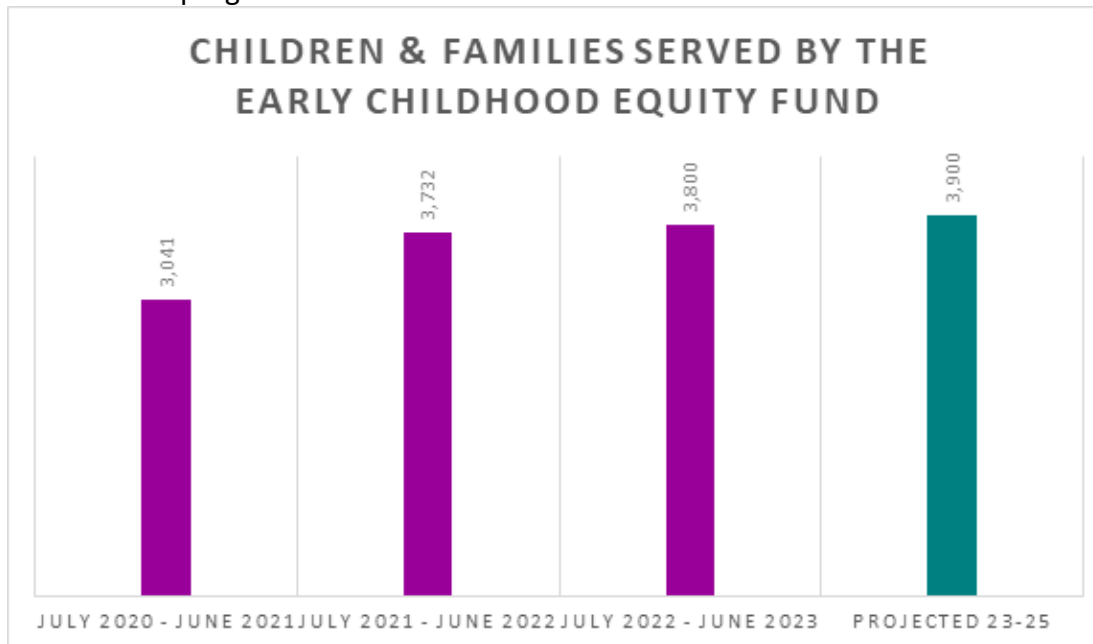
BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

The Early Childhood Equity Fund is a key, innovative strategy as the Agency works to achieve *Raise Up Oregon* and *Growing Oregon Together* system goals, particularly ensuring children arrive ready for kindergarten and supporting healthy, stable and attached families. The lack of access to high-quality early care and education (ECE) is correlated with socioeconomic status and race, and the opportunity gap begins at birth. Children under the age of six are more linguistically, ethnically, and racially diverse than older children and adults. The Early Childhood Equity Fund is an innovative approach to developing and delivering services centered in the culturally specific needs of a community. By increasing the relevancy of ECE services to the children and families served, children are more likely to develop the skills necessary to succeed in subsequent education settings.

Program Performance

The Department of Early Learning and Care is required to complete a program evaluation of the Early Childhood Equity Fund. The most recent evaluation can be found at: https://www.oregon.gov/delc/Documents/2023_ECEF_Final_Report.pdf. The Agency will collect additional data in future evaluations that continues to center the experiences and outcomes of families who participate in ECEF-funded programs.



BUDGET NARRATIVE

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

The Early Childhood Equity Fund is established by ORS 417.781 and 417.782.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

The Early Childhood Equity Fund is funded from an allocation from the Early Learning Account to the Equity Fund Account.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Early Learning Professional Development (Early Learning Account)

Program Overview

Professional development investments are designed to strengthen the overall quality of the early learning system by making investments in Oregon’s early care and education workforce focused on recruitment, preparation, professional development, and retention.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Professional Development is to maintain current service level with \$27,651,075 total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$0	\$27,652,075	\$0	\$27,652,075

Program Description

Professional development opportunities are available to early childhood educators and child care providers to bolster recruitment and retention efforts in the early care and education workforce and further the development of high-quality, culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and inclusive services for children and families. These programs enable the recruitment of a diverse early care and education workforce by providing access to credential and degree programs; ongoing, community-based training; job embedded professional learning opportunities; and supports to increase industry leadership that boost workforce retention.

Access to credentials and degrees: Through “consortia model” partnerships with Child Care Resource and Referral entities, Community Colleges, and Universities, the Agency is working to reduce financial and non-financial barriers for the early learning workforce to obtain credentials and degrees. Scholarships offer opportunities for students who otherwise could not access higher education to support entry into the field as well as ongoing education throughout their early childhood career. Education awards celebrate student successes as providers reach educational milestones.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Ongoing community-based training: Oregon’s system of community-based training is scaffolded through the Oregon Registry and Career Lattice that stores training and education for early care and education professionals to meet requirements for licensing and Employment Related Day Care eligibility. It is a system that can be used as the official record of training for early educators and supports early educators in developing their professional capacity and qualifications. Oregon’s Registry Trainer system provides integrated statewide professional development standards and the requirements for trainers to provide intermediate and advanced level trainings within the early care and education system.

Job-embedded professional learning and coaching: Mentor coaches provide technical assistance, consultation, and guidance to coaches throughout Oregon working with Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten and Preschool Promise programs. Tiered coaching certification supports qualified, effective, and culturally responsive coaching practices and competencies to build and maintain a professional learning workforce. Quality Improvement Specialists and Infant and Toddler Specialists, who work from regional Child Care Resource and Referral entities, provide training, technical assistance, coaching, and job-embedded professional learning directly to child care providers.

Regional Inclusive Partners: The Inclusive Partners program is a statewide program that provides consultation to early learning programs to support and stabilize services to meet the needs of all children and conducts high needs rate assessments to determine whether supplemental Employment Related Day Care payments are available to support children with significant needs associated with disabilities. The program was expanded in 2024 in order to add a Regional Inclusive Partner position into each Child Care Resource and Referral organization in the state. These positions work directly with early learning programs that are seeking supports and resources to serve children that show higher needs. Each regional position is focused on providing responsive services, recommendations and guidance when requests are made so that early educators are prepared and confident in maintaining care for all children.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Nearly 24,000 early educators across the state, approximately 29% of whom are Black, Latino, Indigenous, or from other communities of color, are impacted by these professional learning programs.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Early Learning Professional Development programs support the agency to ensure children arrive ready for kindergarten. High-quality early learning programs have well-documented short-, medium- and long-term benefits for the children who participate in them. These benefits are largely the consequence of the interactions children in these programs experience with warm, responsive, and well-trained adults. Investing in young children requires investing in the adults who work with them. The importance of the workforce to positive outcomes for children is captured in *Growing Oregon Together* under Goal 4: The early learning and child care workforce is diverse, culturally responsive, highly qualified, and well compensated.

Increasing credentials and degrees through the Consortia Model

The Early Learning Professional Development Consortium is a collaboration between Institutions of Higher Education and Child Care Resource & Referral agencies to support cohorts of early educators in obtaining college credentials, certificates, and degrees in the field of Early Care and Education. The Early Learning Professional Development Consortium was funded in two regions of the state by ODE strategic investment funds with the purpose of advancing the education of the early care and education workforce; Southern Oregon and Central Oregon were funded for one year, 2014. The project was so successful in retaining cohorts of college-to-career early educators through college and supporting them in their goals to obtain ECE credentials, certificates, and degrees that philanthropic organizations continued to fund them until 2020. DELC has since reinvested in and expanded the Consortia to additional institutions of higher education. Expansion added Clackamas Community College, Portland Community College and Columbia Gorge Community College. Numbers for degree achievement at these additional institutions have not yet been reported. The expansion also enabled Southern Oregon University to expand their offerings to include a degree program consortia. Consortia have been key in increasing enrollment in ECE higher education opportunities as illustrated in these quotes from one consortia college:

“67% answered they would not be pursuing higher education without this consortia grant.”

“... [The Consortia] has helped to bolster increased enrollment in the ECE program. ...115% increase in ECE courses enrollment from 2021 to 2022 and 28.5% from 2022 to 2023.” Columbia Gorge Community College Navigator

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Regional Consortium - Number of early learning students participating in the 2022/2023 grant year; prior to the expansion and number of degrees achieved is detailed in the table below:

2022 – 2023 Calendar Year	Number of Early Education Students	Degrees achieved
Klamath Community College	57	8
Central Oregon Community College	102	14
Southwestern Oregon Community College	16	2
Umpqua Community College	42	1
Southern Oregon University	168	Not Available*
Rogue Community College	187	22
Total	572	47

*In 2022-2023 SOU did not yet have a degree pathway and provided intensive weekend session trainings for credit only.

Ongoing community-based training: Oregon Registry, Career Lattice, Trainer System and Education Awards

Oregon Registry Steps measure training and education that an individual has accomplished, and then places them on a Step. The career lattice is important because it can help provide strategy to professional development growth, facilitating lateral movement within Oregon’s early childhood education professionals. The total number of Steps awarded represents educator’s growth through professional development and education achievements in Oregon.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Below are the total number of Oregon Registry Steps awarded by year (for 2020 data, we saw a slight reduction due to COVID).

Calendar Year	Number of Steps Awarded
2019	3,139
2020	2,375
2021	2,750
2022	3,000
2023	3,446

Job-embedded professional learning and coaching: Mentor coaches provide technical assistance, consultation, and guidance to coaches throughout Oregon working with Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten and Preschool Promise programs. Tiered coaching certification supports qualified, effective, and culturally responsive coaching practices and competencies to build and maintain a professional learning workforce. The tables below reflect various data points for services delivered to early learning professionals:

Performance Measure	Services Delivered
Trainings conducted by a Quality Improvement Specialist	3,316 trainings conducted
Programs participating in training opportunities provided by local Child Care Resource & Referral agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total by Training Course: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business Practice: 3,332 ○ Mental Health: 5,442 ○ Diversity, equity and Inclusion: 2,795 • Total by Provider (Find Child Care Oregon Programs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Licensed or register center based programs: 1,379 ○ Licensed exempt center based programs: 844 ○ Licensed or register family child care: 2,336

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Regional Inclusive Partners: This regionally based expansion of services was initiated in 2024 and each Child Care Resource and Referral are working to hire these positions into their organizations. By December 2024, each CCR&R will have these positions hired and each will be onboarded by the centralized staff of the Inclusive Partners Program, providing onboarding, mentoring and ongoing professional development to support their direct engagement with early learning programs in each region.

Initial onboarding and position planning meetings have been completed and each region, along with Agency central Inclusive Partner support, has identified key goals and outcomes for their communities. Due to the increase in public awareness and regional supports, we anticipate that more early learning professionals will have access to individualized supports to further inclusive practices. There is a possibility that, with the increased community awareness, more children will be identified as needing more intensive supports through Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, school-aged special education and mental and behavioral health supports. This may also result in more early educators inquiring about financial supplements or incentives.

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

Professional development programs are authorized by ORS 329.219.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

Early Learning Professional Development is funded by Other Funds – Early Learning Account. The funds in this program narrative represent budget received from the Early Learning Account. Professional Learning programs funded by General Fund and Federal Funds are part of Child Care Supports program narrative.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Parenting Education

Program Overview

The Department of Early Learning and Care provides resources for parenting education through Oregon’s Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC) program. The program provides resources for parents to learn about age-appropriate child development skills and milestones, promote positive play and interaction between parent and child, and locate and access community services and supports.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Parenting Education is to maintain current service level with \$4,519,455 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$0	\$4,519,455	\$0	\$4,519,455

Program Description

Parents are their children’s first and most important teachers. The Agency administers the parenting education program through OPEC in the Oregon State University (OSU) College of Health. The program provides families access to high-quality parenting programs and a stronger, more coordinated parenting education system statewide. Resources fund family activities, and evidence-based parenting education classes, offering families an opportunity to learn about child development, share parenting strategies, and connect with other families to create a community where children can thrive. OPEC also supports grantees through evaluation, technical assistance, and professional development led by OSU.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Investments that make additional parenting skills, practices, and resources available is a critical strategy in meeting the Agency’s goal that all children arrive ready for kindergarten; they also promote stable and attached families. Furthermore, expanding access to parenting education is a key strategy throughout *Raise Up Oregon*.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Funding from DELC has been critical to ensuring families with young children receive access to parenting education and family supports as well as to the sustainability of OPEC as a statewide system of support. OPEC was an initiative started by Oregon's four largest philanthropic foundations (Oregon Community Foundation, the Ford Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, and The Collins Foundation) and Oregon State University to establish a statewide system of support for parenting education.

This program is supported with robust evaluation and research as well as capacity-building efforts through the team at Oregon State University in support of strategic planning, technical assistance, workforce development and training (e.g., leadership training, curriculum and facilitation trainings, parent and family leadership development), and additional dedicated effort to ensure family-serving programs are relevant and meaningful; culturally, linguistically, and identity-specific; improve accessibility and reach for families across geographic expanse; and increase access to programs in multiple formats and lengths (in-person, virtual, class series, workshops, family events).

Program Performance

Parenting education services are delivered to families in ways that best meet family and community needs, including in-person, remote, and hybrid models. Services are available in numerous formats, such as evidence-based programs, research-informed workshops, one-on-one parenting coaching, family activities, play and learn groups. The Agency anticipates a minimum service level of 500 families each year for every \$1 million invested.

The partnership with DELC (2021-2023) in the biennium amount of \$4 million (\$2 million annually), reached 37,637 families with young children in Oregon. Specifically, DELC funds supported the following programs for families with young children, through leveraging OPEC's broader infrastructure and state partnerships:

- 164 parenting education multi-class series, serving 1871 families
- 124 parenting workshops, serving 1354 families
- 147 parenting support activities, serving 8872 families
- 66 family activities (e.g., community events), serving 25,540 families

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Overall, in that biennium (2021-2023), with blended funds from DELC, Oregon Department of Human Services, and foundation investment, OPEC reached 167,656 families with children of all ages:

- 707 parenting education multi-class series, serving 7470 families
- 805 parenting workshops, serving 15,478 families
- 373 parenting support activities, serving 51,138 families
- 349 family activities (e.g., community events), serving 93,570 families
- 419 parenting education and family support professionals participating in parenting education curricula trainings

In the 2023-2024 year, DELC funds have reached 15,186 families, supporting:

- 104 parenting education multi-class series, serving 1,311 families
- 48 parenting workshops, serving 544 families
- 119 parenting support activities, serving 7,938 parents and children
- 35 family activities (e.g., community events), serving 5,393 parents and children

The agency expects to serve a similar number of families in the 2024-2025 year as 2023-2024, which would result in an estimated 28,500 families served for the biennium:

- 200 parenting education multi-class series, serving 2,600 families
- 80 parenting workshops, serving 1,000 families
- 160 parenting support activities, serving 17,700 families
- 58 family activities (e.g., community events), serving 7,800 families

At continuing service levels, the agency expects to serve a similar number of families (but at a 3% reduction given cost of service increases). With that assumption, continuing service levels would allow for the following in the 2025-2027 biennium, resulting in an estimated 28,227 families served:

- 194 parenting education multi-class series, serving 2,522 families
- 78 parenting workshops, serving 970 families
- 155 parenting support activities, serving 17,169 families
- 56 family activities (e.g., community events), serving 7,566 families

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

House Bill 3427 (2019) established the Fund for Student Success – Early Learning Account, including investments in “parenting engagement programs.”

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

Parenting Education is funded by Other Funds – Early Learning Account.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Early Learning Program Supports

Program Overview

Early Learning Program Supports maximize the utility and effectiveness of early care and education programs for families by providing additional resources to providers to enhance the services their programs offer. This includes supports for families, as well as early care and education professionals, to meet the needs of communities.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for program supports is to maintain current service level with \$18,663,140 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$0	\$18,663,140	\$0	\$18,663,140

Program Description

Investments in enhancements to early care and education programs increase not only the quality but the breadth of programming for children and their families. Early learning program supports offer additional wrap-around supports available to families, such as ensuring providers are equipped to identify and support the mental health, social-emotional development, cultural, linguistic, or individualized needs of children in care. The supports also increase access to other early care and education professionals, such as Mentor Coaches and Program Quality Coaches, that assist with the implementation and evaluation of program practices and provide resources to allow providers to make improvements to environments. Specific to the Preschool Promise program, enhancements are available to assist with family recruitment, eligibility, placement, and enrollment.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Early learning program supports addresses the objective set by *Raise Up Oregon* to increase the state’s capacity to provide culturally responsive, social-emotional supports for young children and their families by providing resources to providers to learn and integrate those supports in their programming. These supports expand coaching supports to core programs and align with Objective 4.3.a in *Growing Oregon Together*. Children in high-quality and culturally responsive care settings are more likely to be successful in other educational settings. Additionally, enabling providers to establish and improve essential infrastructure for high-quality early care and education, another objective of *Raise Up Oregon and Growing Oregon Together*, will ensure that children have access to safe and healthy care environments.

Program Performance

The Agency leverages these resources to ensure supports for early learning program providers in 442 classrooms serving over 5,300 Preschool Promise enrolled children. These classrooms are supported by approximately fifty coaches and quality improvement specialist who in turn are receiving coaching from six mentor coaches positioned within the Early Learning System Initiative (ELSI) at Oregon State University.

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

Early Learning Program Supports are authorized under ORS 327.274.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

Funding for the early learning programs supports Other Funds as distributed from the Early Learning Account.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program

Program Overview

The Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program (ECSEPP) set to launch in July 2025 will support Oregon early learning and care providers in building positive learning environments for children ages birth through five. It connects early learning and care providers with local mental health and behavioral guidance on positive interventions and offers training and professional development to reduce suspension and expulsions, especially among children of color and those with disabilities. The program aims to foster a more equitable, fair and inclusive early learning system. It also aligns with a new law effective July 2026 that prohibits suspensions and expulsions in early learning environments that receive state funds. The program is set to be renamed in partnership with community partners.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for ECSEPP is to maintain current service level with \$8,355,167 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$8,355,167	\$0	\$0	\$8,355,167

Program Description

The Agency is working with community partners to design and implement the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention program (ECSEPP). The Technical Assistance functions of the ECSEPP are being developed and supported by grants provided by the Agency to Western Oregon University's The Research Institute (TRI), Oregon State University's Early Learning System Initiative (ELSI), the Oregon Infant Mental Health Association (ORIMHA) and Child Care Resource and Referral organizations (CCR&Rs). A strong network of technical assistance already exists and is currently engaged in activities with these funded partners to ensure readiness and coordination to provide training and technical assistance services in the areas of implicit bias, anti-racist classroom practices, inclusion, and promotion of social-emotional learning. In addition, the Agency recently funded the creation of a new position at each CCR&R: the Regional Inclusive Partner, which will expand access to the High Needs Rate that increases funding to support children with significant documented needs and is a supplement to Employment Related Day Care and these Inclusive Partner positions will provide consultation focused on the inclusion of children with disabilities.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation functions are being supported through a contract with the Oregon Infant Mental Health Association (ORIMHA) and 12-16 Regional Service Providers. ORIMHA is providing content expertise, leading the implementation of the new Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program by providing implementation support to regional organizations that were selected to provide IECMHC. The Agency currently holds grant agreements with 12 Regional Service Providers (RSPs) who are responsible for providing IECMHC services in their local communities. Grant agreements with two additional Regional Service Providers will be finalized in July. Outreach to identify Regional Service Providers for two remaining rural regions is currently in progress. Because of the expertise needed to provide IECMHC services, Regional Service Providers are currently in a planning phase and will transition to active implementation of services in cohorts over the next 2-9 months as they complete a series of readiness markers. The Agency anticipates that all Regional Service Providers will reach active implementation by July 1, 2025, with the majority of RSPs reaching implementation well before then. Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants work with early care and education providers and families to develop unique and culturally responsive supports that address the underlying factors that typically lead to the use of suspension or expulsion by providing solutions to support them as children display challenging behaviors. Consultants work with early educators to help them build competencies and skills through training, classroom observation and direct guidance to utilize strategies that support children to be successful in relationship-based environments. The program precedes a ban on suspension and expulsion in early learning and care settings beginning July 2026 established by SB 236 (2021).

The Agency-funded system partners mentioned above will collaborate with local CCR&Rs, Early Learning Hubs, Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE), and other early learning partners, to support the development and implementation of a coordinated system of support. The Agency is implementing a warmline, a centralized place for early learning programs to request support when a child is at risk of suspension or expulsion. The coordinated system of support will ensure a coordinated and aligned approach to respond to requests for support, ensuring that the right service is provided that will enable the child to remain in the educational setting.

The Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention program will be accessible to early learning and care providers across the state that serve children, birth through five (5) years of age, and their families.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

The program offers key strategies to meet *Raise Up Oregon* Goal 3: All Children are thriving in early childhood and beyond and *Growing Oregon Together* Goal 1: All families have access to high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate) and affordable early learning and care that meets their needs, Objective 1.3 Communities have the infrastructure they need to mitigate suspension and expulsion activities in early learning and care settings. In a recent survey of 3,705 families with children in early learning and care programs, conducted by the Oregon Social Learning Center, 9.1% of families reported being asked to leave or “take a break” from the early care and education program. Children with disabilities or with chronic health problems were three times as likely to be suspended or expelled. Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander children and African American or Black children were 1.5 times more likely to be suspended or expelled (17.2% and 16.1%, respectively).¹ The Agency intends to track the rate of suspension and expulsion, across all demographics, with the implementation of the new program.

Additional strategies in the *Growing Oregon Together* strategic plan are to provide culturally responsive and culturally specific infant and early childhood mental health (IECMH) supports in early learning and care, leverage community expertise and experience in infrastructure development, launch and expand regional suspension and expulsion prevention program supports and statewide entity to provide consistent technical assistance and quality assurance, ensure professional development supports in critical areas such as bias, are available to support the community infrastructure, fully implement the warmline for providers to access suspension and expulsion prevention supports, and implement the enforcement of the 2026 ban on suspension and expulsion, with Child Care Licensing Division (CCLD) providing technical assistance and referral to the prevention program.

The Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention program is focused on each of these critical system components, creating a statewide system to request professional development support, have access to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants and other technical assistance providers that are readily available to early learning and care programs. In addition to the detail provided above, this program will help meet goals by providing the state with the opportunity to improve data collection and evaluation efforts and align suspension and expulsion policies across the early learning system and to coordinate with Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education and the K-12 system.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Performance

The Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention program brings the opportunity to create a statewide system of supports and the availability of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation services which have never been available statewide. The time and effort required to launch a new program and align existing services and supports with the newly available services is underway. New professional learning opportunities are launching between July 2024 and July 2025, with IECMHC and Inclusive Partner services launching in phases throughout that period also. The Agency expects these services to begin to fill a much-needed gap in specialized supports across the early learning system. However, the funding level reflects a foundational investment that will require additional resources to expand services over time to fully align with the ban on suspension and expulsion which takes effect in July 2026. The Agency has engaged a culturally diverse Advisory Committee representing multiple roles across the early learning system. This group meets monthly and advises the Agency on the development and implementation of the program.

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

The statutory authority for the program resides in ORS 329A.600, which directs the Agency to develop a program that reduces the incidence of suspension and expulsion. Additionally, ORS 329A.625, which becomes effective on July 1, 2026, prohibits suspension or expulsion in early care and education programs.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program.

This program is funded with General Funds.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Child Care Supports

Program Overview

The Department of Early Learning and Care coordinates the delivery of the following child care supports: Spark, the Inclusive Partners Program, Child Care Resource and Referral entities, 211info, and the early childhood career lattice through Portland State University contracts.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Child Care Supports is to maintain current service level with \$67,095,394 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$5,297,655	\$2,460,127	\$59,337,612	\$67,095,394

Program Description

Child Care Supports provided by the agency include several program strategies to support families and child care providers in Oregon. A brief description of each strategy follows, leveraging General and Federal Funds:

- **Spark:** Spark is Oregon’s Quality Recognition and Improvement system (QRIS). It is required by the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant to ensure consistent foundations of quality in child care settings and to support parent choice and consumer education when selecting a child care program. The Agency, in partnership with community, is currently redesigning Spark to become a more accessible system that supports programs with providing culturally responsive early care and education experiences for children in their communities.
- **Baby Promise:** Baby Promise providers participate in professional development focused on providing high-quality infant and toddler care and receive supports to strengthen business practices. Child Care Resource & Referral entities (CCR&Rs) contract with early learning and care programs in Oregon’s mixed delivery system to provide high-quality care for eligible infants and toddlers. Contracts are based on the true cost of providing care and help provide financial stability for early learning and care programs.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

- **Inclusive Partners:** The Inclusive Partners program assists child care programs to develop and administer individualized supports for children, birth through age 17, who require additional or specialized accommodations in child care settings at no cost to the child care provider or family. Inclusive Partners transitioned from the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities within the Oregon Department of Human Services to the Agency on July 1, 2022. The program performs high-needs assessments, trainings, and consultations in child care settings to support children with special needs – in addition to their family and the child care program that serves them. Trainings and consultations help child care providers and community partners develop the skillsets and resources to ensure children experiencing disabilities are provided developmentally appropriate services within child care programs.
- **CCR&Rs:** Child Care Resource and Referral entities (CCR&Rs) provide services that promote the health, safety, and development of young children in early learning and care settings as part of Oregon’s Early Learning System. CCR&Rs support the early learning and care workforce through coaching, training, and other forms of technical assistance that increase programmatic quality for the children in their care and help the early learning programs stay up to date with health and safety licensing regulations. CCR&Rs also support recruitment for the early care and education workforce and work in collaboration with other community early childhood agencies to advance the region’s early learning system’s strategic plan. Additionally, the agencies will assist early educators as they work with families to help them seek additional supports or services in the community, such as developmental delay assessments. CCR&Rs also promote healthy, safe, and quality learning environments by identifying evidence-based practices for healthy development of identity, communication, motor skills, cognition, problem solving, inclusion practices, and social-emotional development.
- **211:** 211info provides child care referrals for parents seeking child care through the [Find Child Care Oregon](#) data system which is managed and administered by The Research Institute (TRI) at Western Oregon University. The database houses data on all licensed and regulated child care programs in Oregon, including cost, location, capacity, number of slots, current vacancies, ages served, hours of operation, languages of instruction, Quality Rating, availability to families paying with state subsidy, transportation offered, and other data points essential to families searching for early learning and care opportunities. The agency contracts with TRI to maintain the Find Child Care Oregon database and provide guidance to the 211info child care team on utilizing best practices when conducting referrals to families seeking child care. The 211info team also utilizes the 211 database to provide community services referrals to families when additional resources are needed. CCR&R staff work directly with early learning and care programs to ensure the data is up to date and accurate for families when 211 is providing families with referrals. Agency staff access the data points in Find Child Care Oregon including cost and child care availability to inform policy, processes, and to inform strategy and funding decision-making. The database is crucial for data collection, including the

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Market Price Study, which is used to determine subsidy rates for child care providers participating in Employment Related Day Care.

- **Career Lattice (PSU):** The agency contracts with Portland State University to support the early childhood education “career lattice,” which is foundational to the professional learning system that supports the early care and education workforce. Programming includes hosting required training, administering educator awards and higher education scholarships, and overseeing the Oregon Registry, Oregon’s early childhood professional development registry. The Oregon Registry Online (ORO) serves as the database and repository for early educators to submit their required and voluntary professional development credit hours for continuous quality improvement and compliance with child care licensing requirements.
- **Focused Family Child Care Networks:** The goal of Focused Child Care Networks is to increase the availability of high quality child care in communities that have been historically underserved. They have proven to be a highly effective strategy for increasing the number of Spark-rated programs serving priority communities and recognizing the importance of home-based child care providers in serving many of these communities. These networks are particularly well-suited to create linguistically- and culturally-specific supports and are staffed by Quality Improvement Specialists, within each CCR&R, that lead the cohort of early educators. Focused Child Care Networks include a staffed cohort of 15 early educators which receive direct support for professional development aimed at achieving a certificate, degree, and higher step on the Oregon Registry. In addition to professional development, the cohort engages in peer learning and individualized goal setting and in-person support and consultation from the CCR&R network leads. Each cohort spends about two years in the network.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

These services are primarily focused on supporting the early childhood educator and child care workforce across Oregon, while also ensuring families have easy access to information when making decisions about child care for their family. Each program is a critical part of the comprehensive strategy to meet *Raise Up Oregon* and *Growing Oregon Together* goals.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The programs funded by DELC through Child Care Supports improve access to quality child care and build the supply of early learning and care programs by creating workforce pathways, offering scholarships for early education degree programs and access to ongoing support and navigation of the system through CCR&Rs. These opportunities focus on building the skills necessary to implement best practices in early childhood education and child care and promote inclusive settings for children with diagnosed disabilities and their families. They support families by ensuring they have access to subsidized infant-toddler child care – which is the most expensive and least available care setting across the state – while also providing the most up-to-date information on available child care slots in communities.

Program Performance

Spark, Oregon’s Quality Recognition and Improvement System, launched in 2013 and has been in operation ever since. Programs have traditionally participated in Spark by completing a portfolio and earning a star-rating. Starting in October 2023, a second participation pathway was added called a Quality Improvement Cycle. The table below reflects the number of programs that have achieved a rating in the Spark system. Between 2018 and 2023, there have been between 635 and 722 star rated programs. The Program has been in a state of equilibrium where new programs and newly rated programs equal the attrition rate of those that close.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Spark Programs by Rating from 2014 to 2023

Spark Rating	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Commitment to Quality (C2Q) Quality Improvement Cycle Pathway	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Commitment to Quality (C2Q) Star-Rating Pathway	461	804	857	852	719	760	789	751	731	848
3 Star	21	125	180	229	278	275	272	268	255	229
4 Star	4	42	78	66	94	93	86	84	80	71
5 Star	11	68	165	315	348	365	364	353	342	335
Total Participating Programs	497	1039	1280	1462	1439	1493	1511	1456	1408	1483
Total Programs in Oregon including license-exempt facilities	4320	4204	4269	4160	4044	3794	3843	3174	3582	3986
% of Programs Participating in Spark	12%	25%	30%	35%	36%	39%	39%	46%	39%	37%

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Inclusive Partners: The Inclusive Partners program’s objectives are to increase access to inclusive and supportive child care for children with disabilities, increase retention of children with special needs in child care settings over time, and successfully support child care providers serving children 6 weeks to 17 years of age. Families receiving ERDC are potentially eligible to receive increased supplemental subsidies to support their child’s additional supervision and intervention needs related to the child’s individualized needs. This is called the High Needs Rate. Inclusive Partners also provides onsite consultation and technical assistance to early learning professional caring for children with higher needs with or without the High Needs Rate.

Year	Number of High Needs Rate assessments	Number of Consultation visits
2022	106	447
2023	162	610
2024 (through June 30)	97	184

Career Lattice (PSU): Child care programs must report that they have received training in order to maintain their licensure with the Agency.

Program Year	Training Slots Available in Calendar Year	Individuals Created in ORO
2016-17	38,142	14,960
2017-18	32,556	12,942
2018-19	38,990	12,947
2019-20	37,179	12,552
2020-21	28,556	12,384
2021-22	39,734	13,628
2022-23	41,406	19,548

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Focused Family Child Care Networks: The program has provided connection, learning and advancement to early learning and care providers across the state in a variety of program settings.

Focused Child Care Networks (Data 2022 –2023)		
Measure	Description of Services	Total Served
Number of FCCN led by Quality Improvement Specialists	Reach and availability of network based professional learning, and the use of funds dedicated to supporting network based professional learning	129 focused child care networks statewide
Number of programs participating in FCCN	Levels of participation and impact of FCCN on professional learning, and the gap between capacity and demand Measure progress towards a job-embedded and competency based professional learning system, and engagement in continuous quality improvement	600 programs participating in FCCNs
Number of programs working on Spark recognition in a FCCN	Connection between FCCN engagement, level of technical assistance and effects on Spark follow-through	23 programs in FCCNs working for Spark Recognition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 licensed child care centers • 22 licensed homes <i>*Note: Spark used to be a requirement for FCCNS and no longer is.</i>
Number of programs increasing quality through Spark participation	Technical assistance provided by a QIS and quality improvement evidenced in Spark participation Quality of technical assistance provided to programs by a QIS	1,475 programs participating in Spark Evidence provided in Spark participation data

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

Spark is authorized by ORS 329A.261 and required by the federal CCDBG Act of 2014 658G(b)(3); Child Care and Development Fund, 45 C.F.R. § 98.53(a)(3) (2016).

The federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) requires states to develop and implement strategies to increase the supply of and improve the quality of child care services (45 CFR 98.53). ORS 329A.100 through 130 establishes the state's resource and referral system.

The Baby Promise program is authorized by ORS 417.784 and directs the Agency to contract for infant and toddler slots. Oregon state statute 329A.010(2)(a) charges DELC with administering the federal Child Care and Development Fund; Inclusive Partners responds to the federal CCDF regulation 45 CFR 98.53.

ORS 329.219 requires the Agency to establish and implement policies and practices to achieve vigorous and comprehensive early childhood professional development systems in this state that incorporate improved recruitment, preparation, induction, career advancement opportunities and support for early learning providers and professionals, including professionals who provide home visiting services.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

The Child Care Supports programs are funded on an ongoing basis with General Fund, Other Funds, and Federal Funds. In the 2023-25 biennium, additional funding from the federal ARPA Discretionary grant (one-time grant that ends on September 30, 2024) and the Preschool Development Grant (which ended on December 30, 2023), were used for programs.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Employment Related Day Care (Child Care Assistance) Program

Program Overview

Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) is Oregon’s child care assistance program, subsidizing child care for eligible families to support employment, education, and family well-being in stable child care arrangements that support child development. The program previously resided in the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), before moving to the Department of Early Learning and Care (DEL) as a result of HB 3073 (2021), which also greatly expanded program eligibility.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for ERDC is to maintain current service level with \$480,036,614 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$353,624,707	\$0	\$126,411,907	\$480,036,614

Program Description

The ERDC program helps families offset the cost of quality child care by making payments on their behalf to eligible child care providers. Child care supports are crucial to maintain the labor market and assist parents to obtain and maintain employment and upward mobility by way of education and training. Quality child care settings support child development and early education necessary for preparation for kindergarten and beyond. Families must have incomes below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) to be eligible for ERDC.

ERDC offers families flexibility to choose a child care provider that best meets their needs, whether that is a child care center, a licensed family child care home, or a licensed-exempt provider or relative. Families whose incomes are above 100% FPL are required to make a co-pay on a sliding scale, not to exceed 7% of their household income. The Agency pays the child care provider for the remainder of the cost of the child care, up to the maximum reimbursement rate. As of June 2024, the program has a caseload of approximately 16,688, served by about 4,522 active child care providers receiving approximately \$20 million in direct payments each month. As a result of ERDC, the state is a significant purchaser of child care in Oregon, and ERDC provider policies, including payment rates, impact the overall child care market.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

In 2021, House Bill 3073 passed and directed the transfer of the ERDC program to the Department of Early Learning and Care from the Oregon Department of Human Services. The legislation included expanded eligibility for parent physical presence, family well-being activities, coverage for full-time students, and coverage for undocumented children. In addition, the legislation offered greater protection of 12-month eligibility for all families who are eligible for the program and requires a shift from basing provider reimbursement on the market rate to referencing the cost of providing quality care through an alternative rate methodology.

Beginning July 1, 2023, the Early Learning Council, as the rulemaking body for DELC-administered programs, gained rulemaking authority for ERDC. The Agency continues to contract with ODHS for certain functions necessary for the administration of the program, such as eligibility determination, which is conducted through the ONE Integrated Eligibility System and with the support of ODHS field offices. A significant portion of ERDC funding is from the federal Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and ERDC is subject to federal CCDF regulations, which includes eligibility determination, provider payment rates, family co-pays and on-site health and safety monitoring of ERDC child care providers. DELC, as the CCDF lead agency and administrator of ERDC, is responsible for ensuring that ERDC complies with these federal requirements.

Eligibility for the ERDC program remains in the cross-sector ONE Integrated Eligibility (ONE) System, which allows families to complete a single application for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), ERDC, and Oregon Health Plan (OHP). Families do not have to apply separately for programs for which they have overlapping eligibilities, which reduces the burden of applying and submitting supporting verification documents for each program individually.

ERDC activated a waitlist as of November 4, 2023. With the waitlist active, most new applicants are not able to enroll in ERDC. Some families with specific needs can skip the waitlist. These bypasses are identified in Oregon Administrative Rule and built into the ONE system prior to the ERDC program moving to DELC.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

ERDC waitlist bypass exemptions include:

- Families reapplying to ERDC within two months of benefits ending;
- Families who currently receive, or have received in the last 3 months, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF);
- Families who currently receive, or have received in the last 3 months, Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors (TA-DVS);
- Families with children being placed in a contracted slot with Head Start or Early Head Start Child Care Partnership; and
- Families who are working with Child Welfare as part of a Child Protective Services (CPS) assessment or open case and who need child care to:
 - Prevent removal of the child from their home;
 - Allow a child to be returned home; or
 - Allow for placement of the child with a relative or known adult.

As of June 2024, there are over 5,700 families on the waitlist, with an average of 700 cases added each month to the waitlist.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

As a core program for DELC, ERDC is weaved throughout *Growing Oregon Together*, DELC's five year strategic plan that has six goals that aim to foster coordinated, culturally appropriate, and family-centered services that recognize and respect the strengths and needs of all children, families, and early learning and care professionals, and to ensure that all are empowered and thrive.

ERDC is Oregon's primary child care subsidy program that exists to help parents obtain and maintain stable employment and educational opportunities on their path to self-sufficiency and to help children access stable, high-quality child care. Recent legislation has set in place expansions to eligibility for parents and caregivers who are full-time students, children in foster care and engaged with Child Welfare services, and children regardless of their immigration status. The program strengthened 12-month eligibility for all families and increased child care hours eligibility for non-traditional working schedules and family well-being activities, all of which directly contributes to family stability and self-sufficiency.

Supporting parents to work or complete education and training programs can increase parents' resources and reduce stressors on the family. Higher levels of family resources and access to high-quality and affordable child care can stimulate children's early brain development and result in improved long-term child outcomes.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Performance

At the end of the 2021-23 biennium, the total ERDC caseload was at 11,501 cases, with an active caseload (those families connected to a provider) of 9,911 cases. ERDC experienced rapid caseload growth as new policies became effective July 1, 2023. HB 3073 (2021) led new eligibility expansions and program improvements, and as of June 2024, the total caseload has increased by more than 5,000 cases to 16,688, and the active caseload has increased to 12,509. While an increase to an active caseload of 10,258 was approved during the 2023-25 biennium budget process, this means the program did not have enough funding to support the unprecedented growth in enrollment, and ERDC activated a waitlist on November 4, 2023.

Until the 2023-25 Agency Request Budget for the Department of Early Learning and Care, the budget to support child care assistance had General Fund appropriation in the Oregon Department of Human Services and federal limitation in the Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division, for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grants. The table below reflects the move of all funds to DELC for the 2023-25 Biennium.

Biennium	General Fund	Federal Funds - CCDF	Federal Funds – COVID/ARPA One Time Funding	Total Funds
2021-23 Legislatively Approved Budget	\$94,872,563	\$101,562,464	\$112,296,607	\$308,731,634
2023-25 Legislatively Approved Budget	\$223,311,298	\$119,087,995	\$109,825,496	\$452,224,789
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$353,624,707	\$126,411,907	N/A	\$480,036,614

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

Department of Early Learning and Care is responsible for administering funds received by the State of Oregon pursuant to the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 2014 (CCDBG) under ORS 329A.010. The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) is the funding mechanism to transfer funds to the State under CCDBG. ORS 329A.500 gives the Early Learning Council the authority to regulate the ERDC program, in consultation with the Oregon Department of Human Services.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

The child care subsidy program is funded by General Fund and Federal Funds. In the 2025-27 Agency Request Budget, 26% of the subsidy funding for ERDC is supported by the federal CCDF, which gives states, Tribes, and territories funding to provide child care services for low-income working families. Seventy-four percent of the funding for ERDC subsidies is General Fund, which prior to 2023-25 Legislatively Adopted Budget was part of the Oregon Department of Human Services budget. At the beneficiary level, eligible families make a copayment for child care services. Eligibility for the program is defined by a combination of state and federal law. 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) § 98.20 defines eligibility for CCDF funded child care programs.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Healthy Families Oregon

Program Overview

Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) is a free, voluntary home visiting program, offering support and education to families who are expecting or parenting newborns. HFO utilizes a strength-based, family-centered approach that respects and values the unique cultural and individual differences of each family. The program emphasizes building on family strengths, fostering resilience, and empowering parents to be their child's first and most important teacher. HFO collaborates with a wide range of community partners, including healthcare providers, early childhood education programs, social service agencies, and local community organizations, to ensure families receive comprehensive and coordinated support.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for HFO is to maintain current service level with \$43,516,349 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$33,310,113	\$10,206,236	\$0	\$43,516,349

Program Description

Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) is an accredited multi-site state system with Healthy Families America (HFA) and is one of Oregon's largest child abuse prevention programs, steeped in Infant and Toddler Mental Health Principles. HFO is offered in all 36 counties of Oregon via 17 grantees.

Mission: Healthy Families Oregon is dedicated to promoting positive childhood outcomes by providing comprehensive support and resources to families. Our mission is to strengthen families, prevent child abuse and neglect, and enhance child development through early intervention and community-based services.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Goals:

1. **Promote Healthy Child Development:** Ensure children reach their developmental milestones and are ready for school.
2. **Support Parents:** Equip parents with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be the best parents they can be.
3. **Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect:** Reduce the risk factors and enhance the protective factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect.
4. **Strengthen Families:** Foster strong, stable, and nurturing relationships within families.

Target Population: HFO serves expectant parents and families with newborns and young children up to age 3 who are experiencing various stressors that may affect their ability to provide a safe and nurturing environment for their children.

Key Services:

1. **Home Visiting:** Trained Family Support Specialists conduct regular home visits to provide personalized support, parenting education, and developmental screenings.
2. **Parenting Education:** Offer evidence-based parenting programs and resources to enhance parenting skills and knowledge.
3. **Health and Developmental Screenings:** Regular screenings to monitor child development and connect families with early intervention services if needed.
4. **Resource Referral:** Assist families in accessing community resources such as healthcare, housing, employment, and other social services.
5. **Support Groups:** Facilitate group sessions for parents to share experiences, build a support network, and learn from each other.

Program Approach: HFO utilizes a strength-based, family-centered approach that respects and values the unique cultural and individual differences of each family. The program emphasizes building on family strengths, fostering resilience, and empowering parents to be their child's first and most important teacher.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Outcomes: HFO aims to achieve the following outcomes for participating families:

- Improved child health and development.
- Enhanced parental knowledge and skills.
- Increased family stability and self-sufficiency.
- Reduced incidence of child abuse and neglect.

Community Partnerships: HFO collaborates with a wide range of community partners, including healthcare providers, early childhood education programs, social service agencies, and local community organizations, to ensure families receive comprehensive and coordinated support. Healthy Families Oregon is committed to fostering a nurturing and supportive environment for all families, ensuring every child has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

The HFO program is a unique resource for new and expecting parents, furthering the Agency's goal of supporting stable and attached families. The program provides access to evidence-based services that include parenting education and promotion of parent-child relationships, child development screenings and supports, and linkages to community-based health, mental health, housing, financial, and educational resources. Notably, HFO furthers the objectives in *Raise Up Oregon* that families feel confident in their ability to be their children's first teacher and aligns with *Growing Oregon Together* objectives related to expanding infant and toddler services and providing families with access to culturally and linguistically responsive family education and support opportunities. The program also helps identify a child's socio-emotional, developmental, and health care needs at early stages, preventing the need for more intense services later.

Healthy Families America (HFA) has a robust body of evidence demonstrating positive outcomes for families and children. Multiple independent evaluations have consistently shown that HFA programs significantly reduce child maltreatment, improve parenting practices, and enhance child health and developmental outcomes. Families participating in HFA programs exhibit increased use of preventive health care services and greater parental knowledge of child development. Additionally, HFA has been linked to improved maternal health, reduced parental stress, and stronger parent-child relationships. These outcomes highlight HFA's effectiveness in fostering healthy, nurturing environments that support long-term family well-being and child success.

Source: [Research and Evidence of Effectiveness | HFA \(healthyfamiliesamerica.org\)](https://www.healthyfamiliesamerica.org)

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Performance

Healthy Families American sets caseload standards for HFO programs. As a result, if a local program experiences high levels of turnover among their home visiting workforce, overall caseloads will decrease until staff are sufficiently trained over 36 months. The data below provides an overview of the HFO program with the data on the number of HFO sites reporting data, number of home visits completed and the number of home visitor professionals performing the home visits completed.

Source: Healthy Families America Site Tracker (HFAST)

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of sites reporting	15	12	16	15	14	14	15	16
Number of Home Visits Completed	36,350	22,791	42,184	38,495	30,723	25,118	28,107	28,886
Number of Focus/Target Children	3,286	1,614	2,392	2,306	2,250	1,798	1,946	2,120
Number of Home Visitors Professionals	157	149	155	139	134	136	145	145

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

The Healthy Families Oregon program is authorized by ORS 417.795.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

The HFO program is funded by the following funding sources; General funds, Other Funds: Title XIX Medicaid and Title IV-B2, and Other Funds - Early Learning Account.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Relief Nurseries

Program Overview

Relief Nurseries offer integrated early childhood therapeutic and family support services to prevent children and their families from needing additional child welfare services in the future as a public-private partnership with the Department of Early Learning and Care.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Relief Nurseries is to maintain current service level with \$28,796,632 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$17,629,057	\$11,167,575	\$0	\$28,796,632

Program Description

The Relief Nursery model serves children birth through five and their families. Families experiencing multiple stressors in areas such as mental and physical health, financial, and violence, are eligible for the program. Children and their families can receive home visits, respite care, parent support and education, as well as tangible supports such as clothing and food, developmental screening, transportation support, and nutritious meals. Children in the Therapeutic Early Childhood Program receive three to six hours of therapeutic class time per week, home visits weekly to monthly, and all the supports named above. Therapeutic classrooms have low group sizes and adult-child ratios (e.g., 3:6 for infants) and use trauma informed and culturally responsive social-emotional curricula. Staff are required to meet specific education and experience thresholds as well as complete initial and ongoing training on components of the Relief Nursery model and trauma informed services.

Relief Nurseries are public-private partnerships, with each Relief Nursery providing at least a 25% community match to state funds. The Agency is responsible for administering the public funds that the legislature allocates to the Relief Nurseries. The Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries (OARN) supports the practices, monitoring, and certification of Relief Nurseries. Relief Nursery programs employ highly qualified personnel with diverse backgrounds and must be licensed child care facilities.

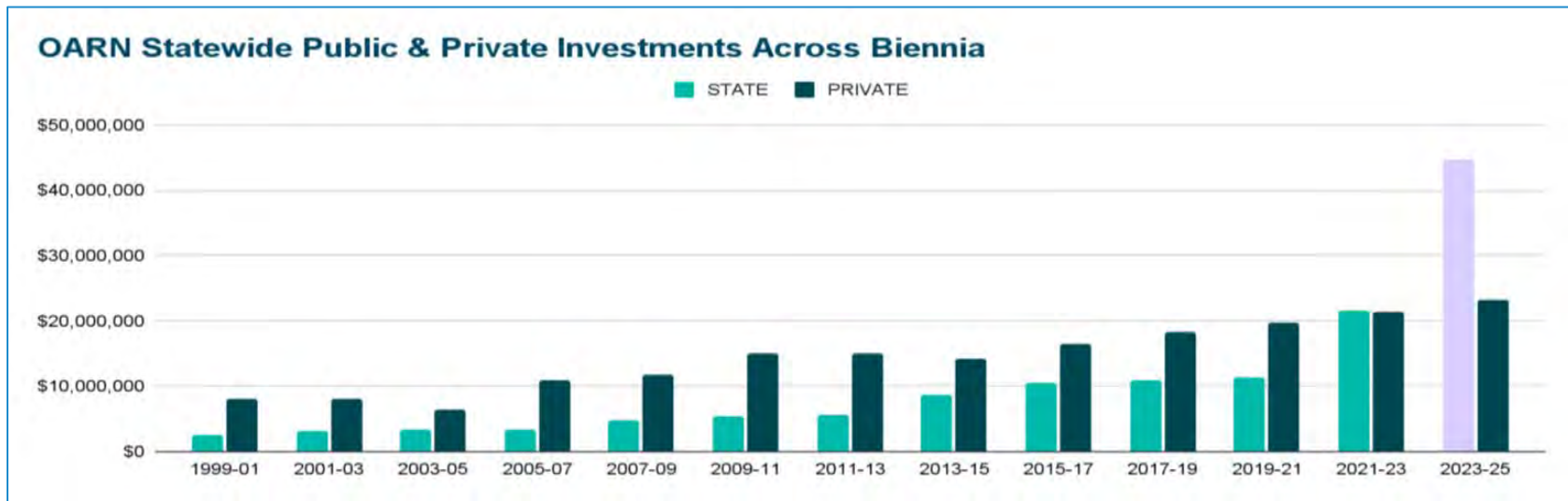
BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Relief Nurseries make progress toward *Raise Up Oregon* goal: children live in healthy, stable and attached families. Relief Nurseries also further specific *Raise Up Oregon* and *Growing Oregon Together* objectives, including increasing access to coordinated and comprehensive services that reduce participation in the child welfare system. The Relief Nursery logic model (found at this link: <https://www.oregonreliefnurseries.org/outcomes>) demonstrates that 95% of children whose families enroll in a Relief Nursery program do not experience maltreatment. Long-term outcomes include a reduction in the number of children that have adverse childhood experiences and an increase in the number of children that can remain safely in the home.

Program Performance

The first Relief Nursery was opened in 1984. Since that time, Relief Nurseries have expanded to 20 counties in the state. There has been growth in the number of children served, as well as the number of sites across the state, as the legislature has increased investments in the program. Below is information from the Oregon Relief Nurseries Association on the growth of the program:



BUDGET NARRATIVE

The table below is a brief history of the state funding for Relief Nurseries from the 2015-17 to 2021-23 biennium:

Biennium	General Fund	Other Funds	Other Funds – Early Learning Account	Total Funds
2015-17 LAB	\$8,600,000	\$1,999,466	N/A	\$10,599,466
2017-19 LAB	\$8,918,200	\$2,073,550	N/A	\$10,991,750
2019-21 LAB	\$9,407,092	\$2,002,345	\$2,800,000	\$14,209,437
2021-23 LAB	\$11,811,597	\$2,088,446	\$7,840,800	\$21,740,843

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

Relief Nurseries are authorized by ORS 417.786 and ORS 417.778. ORS 417.788.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

Relief Nurseries are funded with General Fund, Other Funds-Title XX transferred from the Oregon Department of Human Services, Other Funds– Assets Forfeiture distributions received from local law enforcement agencies from the sale of seized assets related criminal activities and Other Funds – Early Learning Account.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Early Learning Hubs

Program Overview

Oregon’s sixteen regional [Early Learning Hubs](#) serve as the state’s regional partner in building an early childhood system that includes the full set of supports that young children and their families need to grow and thrive. These supports include the areas of physical and mental health, housing, social services, early learning and care, and workforce development working in concert to coordinate policies, programs, and services; create infrastructure; improve integration; and achieve scale.

Early Learning Hubs provide local community coordination for children ages 0-5 and their families, with an equity-driven focus on families who have been historically underserved and under-resourced by bringing together community-partners to develop strategic plans, analyze data, and engage in shared problem solving.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Early Learning Hubs is to maintain current service level with \$24,340,811 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$17,352,738	\$6,988,073	\$0	\$24,340,811

Program Description

Early Learning Hubs focus on supporting the development of an effective and coherent regional early childhood system that centers the needs and preferences of families. One common systems-building approach is the creation of collaborative partnerships that include people and organizations across multiple sectors working together to achieve shared goals. These partnerships can engage in multiple activities such as needs assessments, strategic planning, community organizing, policy advocacy, and the launching of a range of systems-change strategies.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Vision

The Early Learning Hubs believe that when children and families thrive, Oregon thrives. The Early Learning Hubs share the same vision as *Raise Up Oregon* (2024-2028):

Oregon's young children, prenatal to age five, experience an early start that results in positive health, education, and life outcomes regardless of zip code, race, and family income.

The early childhood system goals of *Raise Up Oregon*:

Goal 1: The early childhood system is equitable: integrated, accessible, inclusive, anti-racist, and family centered.

Goal 2: All families with young children are supported to ensure their well-being.

Goal 3: All children are thriving in early childhood and beyond.

Mission

The primary purpose of the Early Learning Hubs is to advance the regional early childhood system in support of the statewide goals through their three core functions as **convening, connecting, and building the capacity** with:

- Families
- Cross-sector partners included in *Raise Up Oregon*: early learning and care, health, human services, housing, public education, higher education, and workforce development
- Community partners, such as libraries and museums, culturally specific organizations, city and county government, advocates
- Private partners, such as business and philanthropy

The Early Learning Hubs' secondary purpose is to work with the Department of Early Learning and Care and support the development and progress of regional early learning and care services and programs that meet the needs of families. This includes a role in supporting enrollment processes for early learning programs, including the Preschool Promise Program.

Early Learning Hubs have the following roles in advancing the regional early learning and care sector in a manner that addresses their region's unique challenges and needs through their relationship with DELC:

BUDGET NARRATIVE

1. Use and discuss relevant data with families and community partners to understand the region, inform the planning and implementation of state and regional initiatives, and identify priority populations related to early learning and care.
2. Partner with Child Care Resource & Referrals (CCR&R) to increase the availability of child care and preschool, support professional development, and engage families in early learning and care.
3. Leverage resources in regional strategies, services, and programs in collaboration with families and community partners that support all children thriving.
4. Partner with state initiatives to involve families, providers, and community partners in the development, alignment, and implementation of a regional coordinated system of supports for inclusion and social-emotional well-being in early learning and care.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Through *Raise Up Oregon*, Oregon's state agencies have recognized that the early childhood system must include supports that young children and their families need to grow and thrive.

Raise Up Oregon calls out the specific and collaborative contributions that multiple state agencies must commit to building this system. The most important work of building a comprehensive early childhood system happens in communities and with community-based organizations and families themselves. Beginning operations in 2015, the Early Learning Hubs were founded in 2013 to play a critical role in advancing Oregon's early childhood system by centering the voices of families and communities more fully as designers of the regional early childhood system. The vision and goals of the Hubs informed *Raise Up Oregon's* first edition in 2018. In the latest version, the Hubs are specifically mentioned and called upon to play a critical role in advancing the early childhood system.

Program Performance

The Early Learning Hubs have demonstrated their commitment to building an effective and coherent regional early childhood system for over ten years. This ongoing commitment is reflected in the Hubs' pivotal role in informing decisions across the agency through their valuable insights. The Hubs are deeply in tune with their communities and are highly knowledgeable on their regions' complexities and aim to strategically fund programs utilizing the dollars provided by DELC to ensure they meet the diverse needs of their region.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Their efforts include submitting quarterly reports and participating in monthly check-ins with the Department of Early Learning and Care staff ensure a constant feedback loop and fostering ongoing communication. The quarterly reports offer insights into Hub activities and progress, aiming to ensure they are meeting the priorities of their region.

The Department of Early Learning and Care is required to complete program evaluation for the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation program. The evaluation for 2022, conducted by Portland State University, can be found at: <https://www.oregon.gov/delc/Documents/2022%20KPI%20Retrospective%20Report%20FINAL%20FULL%202024-2-21.pdf>.

Additionally, an annual report is submitted for Title IV-B2 funds to the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS). Title IV-B2 Family Preservation and Family Support Services funds are received by the Oregon Department of Early Learning & Care (DELIC) from ODHS. These funds support the provision of community-based family support services in four goal areas: Early Childhood Development/Early Learning; Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention; Adolescent Risk Factors; and Child Poverty.

In 2023, the Early Learning Hubs utilized Title IV-B2 funds to support various programs tailored to their regions' specific needs. These programs provided culturally relevant child development services, comprehensive support from parent educators and family resource coordinators, basic needs assistance, support for migrant families, home visiting services, community engagement events, and more.

2023 Total Number of Children Served (Family Support): 47,678

2023 Total Number of Children Served (Family Preservation): 5,345

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

Early Learning Hubs are established by ORS 417.827.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

Funding for the Early Learning Hubs includes an appropriation from the state General Fund, Other Funds – Title IV-B2, funds received from the Oregon Department of Human Services, and Other Funds from the Early Learning Account. No increase above Current Service Level is requested for this program for the 2023-25 Agency Request Budget.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Tribal Hub

Program Overview

HB 2055 (2021) directed the Department of Early Learning and Care to establish a Tribal Early Learning Hub to coordinate early learning services provided to American Indian and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) of the nine federally recognized Tribal nations within Oregon’s borders. The Tribal Advisory Committee was established to advise the Agency and the Early Learning Council on the role, function, and structure of the Tribal Hub.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for the Tribal Hub is to maintain current service level with \$664,922 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$664,922	\$0	\$0	\$664,922

Program Description

Per ORS 417.831, the Tribal Advisory Committee (TAC) is responsible for making recommendations to “deliver early care and education services to the Tribal communities of this state in a culturally specific manner.” While these recommendations are being developed, the nine federally recognized Tribes within Oregon’s borders have each received funding to promote Tribal language and culture preservation and provide early learning activities within their communities. The Tribes have used this funding to provide updated classroom materials for preschoolers, expand cultural programs for young children and their families, increase wages for early educators, implement community outreach events for families with young children, provide training to early learning educators, and implement evidence-based education frameworks across their programs.

To meet the intent of HB 2055 (2021) and the needs of the nine federally recognized Tribes within Oregon’s borders, the TAC recommended statutory changes that would replace the Tribal Early Learning Hub with a Tribal Early Learning Plan and Fund. This plan would serve as the statewide early learning and care plan for children prenatal through age 8, families, educators, and providers who are Tribal. The proposed Fund is intended to support the statewide Tribal Early Learning Plan. Together, this program supports and elevates cultural and experiential early learning and care and ensure access to cultural resources and curriculum in early learning spaces. DELC aims to support the early learning vision and direction of the nine federally recognized Tribes within Oregon’s borders.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Federally Recognized Tribes are individual Sovereign Nations with a unique legal relationship between the United States Government and Tribal Governments. This relationship is derived from the political relationship that Tribes have with the federal government and is not based on race. Tribal governments are separate sovereign nations with powers to protect the health, safety, education, and welfare of their members and to govern their lands. The state of Oregon honors Tribal sovereignty and recognizes the right of Tribes to self-determination and self-governance. The nine federally recognized Tribes within Oregon's borders have identified the importance of access to cultural and experiential early learning and care to ensure access to cultural resources and curriculum and early learning spaces. Honoring Tribal Sovereignty and each Tribe's autonomy to identify and meet the unique needs of their educators, caregivers, families and children are core tenets of proposed statutory changes to the Tribal Hub statute.

The Tribal Early Learning Plan recommended by the Tribal Advisory Committee has the following objectives to meet the educational, child care, and developmental needs and goals for Tribal children prenatal through age eight and their families, which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Improve Tribal access to DELC programs;
- Promote Tribal History/Shared History;
- Promote the progression of developmental milestones, honoring language and culture;
- Improve kindergarten readiness and improve literacy and numeracy levels between kindergarten and grade three parents and caregivers, honoring language and culture;
- Build Capacity for Tribal Early Learning Providers and Educators;
- Support Native American language and culture revitalization and preservation;
- Encourage and increase parental and familial engagement in Tribal children's educational, child care, and developmental plans;
- Promote the capacity of programs to involve and engage Tribal parents/caregivers.

Program Performance

The Agency is working with the Tribal Advisory Committee to codify the requirements of a Tribal Early Learning Plan and associated Tribal Early Learning Fund to resource the early learning and care work of the nine federally recognized Tribes within Oregon's borders.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

The Tribal Hub is established by ORS 417.831.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

The Early Learning Tribal Hub is funded with General Fund.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Birth Through Five Literacy Plan

Program Overview

The Department of Early Learning and Care is directed to develop a Birth Through Five (BTF) Literacy Plan to increase access to culturally specific early literacy programs for children from birth to age five, to provide training and coaching for direct service staff in early literacy, and to develop and expand language revitalization efforts by federally recognized Indian tribes in Oregon. The purpose of this Plan is to articulate the ways that many of the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) programs already provide support to parents and young children related to comprehensive, holistic early literacy supports, as well as the gaps in services and recommended investments to address identified gaps. Further, the Plan is intended to identify ways to increase the consistency of high-quality culturally and linguistically responsive and developmentally appropriate literacy support to parents and caregivers with young children and to set them up for success when they enter kindergarten.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Birth Through Five Literacy Plan is currently \$34,854,001 total funds. Policy Package 580 makes an additional funding request for General Fund.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$24,841,500	\$10,012,501	\$0	\$34,854,001

Program Description Aligned with multiple objectives in *Growing Oregon Together*, the Birth Through Five (BTF) Literacy Plan was enacted through legislation (House Bill 3198) in 2023. The purposes of the Plan are to strengthen culturally specific early literacy supports for children from birth to age five, create more consistency and alignment across programs by providing training and coaching for direct service staff that engage with families and children in early literacy, and support language revitalization efforts by federally recognized Indian Tribes in Oregon. This is achieved by investing in DELIC funded programs, the Early Learning Professional Development System, Parenting Supports, and Tribal Nations.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

DELIC programs promote early literacy development through culturally specific child and caregiver programming and professional learning for the early educator workforce. These programs leverage several strategies that promote early literacy including:

- **Parenting Education:** Parent education workshops, classes and community events all focus on recognizing parents as each child's first teacher, providing them with tools, resources and supports to meet their child's needs.
- **Home Visiting:** Standalone and complementary home visiting services continue to promote parents as their child's first teachers, with a focus on the mental, behavioral and physical health needs of parents and young children prenatally through age three.
- **Community Need:** It is important to center community voice in understanding what works in different communities. This means being responsive to community need by resourcing innovative programming that meets the needs of diverse communities and align with the goals and outcomes of DELIC across professional development, parenting education, kindergarten transition programs, and more.
- **Tribal Language Preservation:** DELIC has a government-to-government commitment to support the nine federally recognized Tribes within Oregon's borders to revitalize and preserve Tribal language and culturally sustaining care.
- **Developmentally Appropriate Practice:** The Oregon Department of Education and the Early Learning Division (now DELIC) released the Early Learning and Kindergarten Guidelines in 2016. This comprehensive document includes developmentally appropriate practices for preschool and kindergarten and is a tool for ongoing professional development of the shared workforce.

The funds are invested in DELIC programs that provide support to parents and young children related to comprehensive, holistic early literacy supports, and in community-based organizations, culturally specific programs, and early learning providers that promote early literacy development for student groups that have historically experienced academic disparities. The funds will also be invested in the Early Learning Professional Development system to promote early literacy development through professional learning opportunities for the early educator workforce and promote best practices in literacy instruction through ongoing coaching support and through the development of training modules.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Children spend most of their lives at home or in the community, so parents and caregivers have a role to play in reinforcing the learning that happens in early learning settings and they must be supported as full partners in their children’s literacy development. BTF Literacy funds will be used to increase support to parents and caregivers, through home visiting and parent educational opportunities, to empower them to be partners in their children’s literacy skill and knowledge development. Children’s literacy development is deepened through their lived experiences, where their unique languages, cultures, and identities are affirmed by families and caregivers who serve as important first teachers.

The BTF Literacy funds will be available for Tribal Nations to develop and expand language revitalization and preservation efforts by federally recognized Indian Tribes in Oregon. This aligns with DELC’s strategic plan *Growing Oregon Together* by honoring and recognizing the sovereignty of the nine federally recognized Tribal Nations within Oregon and ensures strong government-to-government relationships to benefit Tribal communities through funding and programs that are designed to meet Tribal early learning needs and goals.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Brain science tells us that children develop emergent literacy skills from birth, prompting a need to start supporting parents and caregivers and their children well before children begin the K-12 education journey. The first sounds a child may hear or see (signed) are the voices of the people in their home environment, building neural pathways and serving as the initial source of knowledge about language and their world. Families and caregivers are essential first partners in oral language development that cultivates later success in literacy and life. To build this readiness for school and to ensure schools are ready for students, parents and families must be recognized and supported as the first, most important teachers in a child’s life. Before a child learns to read and write, they learn to listen and speak in their home language. This aspect of parent engagement was a consistent theme in community engagement conducted by the Governor’s Office to inform the development of HB 3198. Implementation of the Birth Through Five Literacy Plan is identified in *Growing Oregon Together* (Goal 1.1.c). The long-term goals and metrics are in development and will be included in the Birth Through Five Literacy Plan submitted to the legislature in December 2024.

Families and communities strengthen school-based learning. Outside of school, children spend most of their lives at home or in the community. Parents and caregivers have a role to play in reinforcing the learning that happens at school as much as possible at home, and they must be supported as full partners in their children’s literacy development. Children’s literacy learning is deepened through their lived experiences, where their unique languages, cultures, and identities are affirmed by families and caregivers who serve as important first teachers. By providing resources to families in the early years, they will be better supported to strengthen their child’s school-based learning in K-12.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Performance

In 2023-25, \$9.4 million were released in the second year of the biennium through special appropriation. DELC distributed \$4.7 million to enhance early literacy activities offered by the Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KPI) program administered by the regional Early Learning Hubs across the state and through a request for application process distributed \$4.7 million by leveraging the eligibility requirements of the Early Childhood Equity Fund and also offering sole source applications to the nine federally recognized Indian Tribes in the geographic boundaries of the state of Oregon. Implementation data will be included in the December 2024 BTF Literacy Report. Since this is a new initiative, there is no historical data; program year 2024-2025 will be year one baseline data.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Inputs for Service Delivery	Anticipated Outcomes and Metrics
Birth Through Five Literacy through Early Childhood Equity Fund (ECEF)	
<p>Application for Funding to ECEF grantees and eligible applicants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early literacy resources and materials development and distribution • Culturally relevant early literacy training and professional development • Community engagement activities to identify community-specific gaps in early literacy activities to further inform the 2024 Birth Through Five Literacy Plan. <p><i>Activities will vary by grantee based on application.</i></p>	<p>Metrics will vary depending on each organization’s proposed used of funding based on community need. This data will be collected through grantees’ monthly reports.</p> <p><u>Metric 1</u>: Number of families participating in early literacy engagement activities or receiving early literacy resources.</p> <p><u>Metric 2</u>: Number of educators receiving culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate early literacy training.</p> <p><u>Metric 3</u>: Number of early literacy trainings offered.</p> <p><u>Metric 4</u>: Number of early literacy family engagement activities held.</p> <p><u>Metric 5</u>: Number of culturally relevant early literacy resources distributed.</p>

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Program	
<p><u>Funding to all 16 regional Early Learning Hubs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishment or expansion of parent engagement activities, including book distribution in multiple languages focused on early literacy development; • Establishment or expansion of Little Free Libraries in communities that have been historically underserved; • Establishment of regional partnerships to increase access to books, such as Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library program. <p><i>Activities will vary depending on community need.</i></p>	<p>Metrics will vary depending on each Hubs’ proposed use of funding based on community need. This data will be collected through Hubs’ quarterly reports.</p> <p><u>Metric 1:</u> Number of families participating in family engagement activities or events.</p> <p><u>Metric 2:</u> Number of families receiving early literacy resources and materials.</p> <p><u>Metric 3:</u> Number of educators participating in early literacy development trainings.</p> <p><u>Metric 4:</u> Number of early literacy trainings offered.</p> <p><u>Metric 5:</u> Number of early literacy resources and materials distributed.</p>

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

The Birth Through Five Literacy Plan is authorized by [ORS 327.839 and ORS 327.841](#).

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

The BTF Literacy initiative is funded by Other Funds-Early Learning Account.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Other Early Learning Grants

Program Overview

The Other Early Learning Grants includes several smaller grant programs. The larger two are Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library (DPIL) and the Child Care Infrastructure Fund (CCIF) technical assistance.

Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading through book gifting for early learners. The program mails free, high-quality books to the homes of children from birth to age five, no matter the income level of the family, and develops engagement and skills that form the basis of literacy and educational success.

The Child Care Infrastructure Fund (CCIF) is administered by Business Oregon, working with the Department of Early Learning and Care, other state agencies and private and non-profit entities to implement a grant and loan program to provide financial assistance for child care infrastructure activities. DELC is developing a technical assistance program to support early learning and care programs in applying for CCIF opportunities and has contracted for technical assistance services through First Children’s Finance and Northwest Native Chamber.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for the Other Early Learning Grants is to maintain current service level along with an increased investment in the Dolly Parton Imagination Library requested in POP 580.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$6,971,948	\$1,734,399	\$0	\$8,706,347

Senate Bill 5506 (2023) appropriated \$1.7 million General Fund to DELC for the implementation of the DPIL program.

DELC is requesting an additional \$2.2 million in POP 580. It is estimated that an additional \$2.2 million will cover the cost of program expansion, registering 65% of eligible children age birth to five. The estimated cost to maintain the 65% registration is \$4.2 million per biennium thereafter.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Senate Bill 5506 (2023) also provided \$5 million in General Fund appropriation for DELC to provide technical assistance to child care providers seeking to access the Child Care Infrastructure Fund (CCIF). CCIF is a competitive statewide grant program focused on providing funds for the establishment, expansion, and improvements of child care facilities across the state. Applicants who operate culturally specific early learning programs will be prioritized for these funds.

Program Description

In the 2023 legislative session, Senate Bill 5506, Section 53, allocated \$1.7 million for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Oregon program. The established program will increase the reach and access to free books for eligible children, regardless of their family's income or geographic location. Section 54 allocated \$5 million to DELC for technical assistance to child care providers who access the Child Care Infrastructure Fund.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Oregon

Overall program funding is a combination of state General Fund and funding from local program partners. The state funds 50% of the cost of the books (\$1.15 per child per month) and local program partners are responsible for remaining 50% of the costs of the books (\$1.15 per child per month) on an ongoing basis.

Prior to Senate Bill 5506, approximately 50,000 or 25% of eligible children were enrolled in Dolly Parton's Imagination Library through local program partners. With the state funding allocated to operate the program and match the local program partners cost of the books, Oregon is expanding coverage to regions of the state where access to free books is unavailable and increasing enrollment in this evidence-based program. The goal is to reach approximately 50,000 more children birth through age five across the state and bring total coverage to 50% of the eligible population by the end of 2023-25 and reach the 65% enrollment target by the end of 2025-27 biennium. Based on the experience of other states, the Imagination Library expects the program growth to stabilize at 65% percent of all eligible children.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The program is delivered through contracting directly with the Dollywood Foundation to operate Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library of Oregon, which includes the following:

- Coordinate Annual Blue Ribbon Book Selection Committee;
- Provide registration database and support;
- Coordinate monthly book order and fulfillment;
- Mail Imagination Library books monthly to registered children’s homes;
- Foster growth, development, and sustainability of local programs in communities;
- Fiscal administration of program costs and invoicing for local program partners;
- Create universal access to the program, bringing partners in their communities aimed at ensuring that no children are missed;
- Solicit donations, gifts, and other funding opportunities at many levels to financially support the communities;
- Develop community engagement opportunities for local partners;
- Outcome reporting and performance tracking.

Child Care Infrastructure Fund Technical Assistance Program

The technical assistance funding of \$5 million in General Fund is contracted between two organizations, First Children’s Finance and Northwest Native Chamber. First Children’s Finance (FCF) is a national non-profit organization that has established an Oregon center to provide technical assistance to child care businesses. FCF focuses on the goal of increasing the supply and sustainability of child care programs by offering comprehensive business and financial training, coaching, consulting, technical assistance. Their work is critical in ensuring that child care providers across Oregon, especially those in underserved areas, have the resources and support needed to apply for CCIF funding.

Northwest Native Chamber (NWNC) is focused on serving culturally specific businesses and communities. They offer resources for business startups and connections to other Native American-operated businesses. NWNC provides culturally responsive technical assistance, including legal services, accounting, credit coaching, and human resource support. NWNC’s extensive referral network and experience with Business Oregon funds will be instrumental in guiding CCIF grantees to fully leverage this grant opportunity.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Oregon

Studies have consistently shown that having books in the home significantly impacts children's educational outcomes. Research has demonstrated that even a small home library can lead to an increase in educational achievement. For example, a study in 2014 found that children from homes with as few as 25 books achieved 2.4 more years of education compared to children from bookless homes, regardless of their parents' education and social status. Moreover, building a child's home library can lead to improved test scores and increase the likelihood of college completion by 19 percent. This same study found that regardless of how many books the family already has, each addition to a home library helps the children get a little farther in school. However, having books in the home has a greater impact on children who come from homes where books are rare (M.D.R. Evans, 2014).

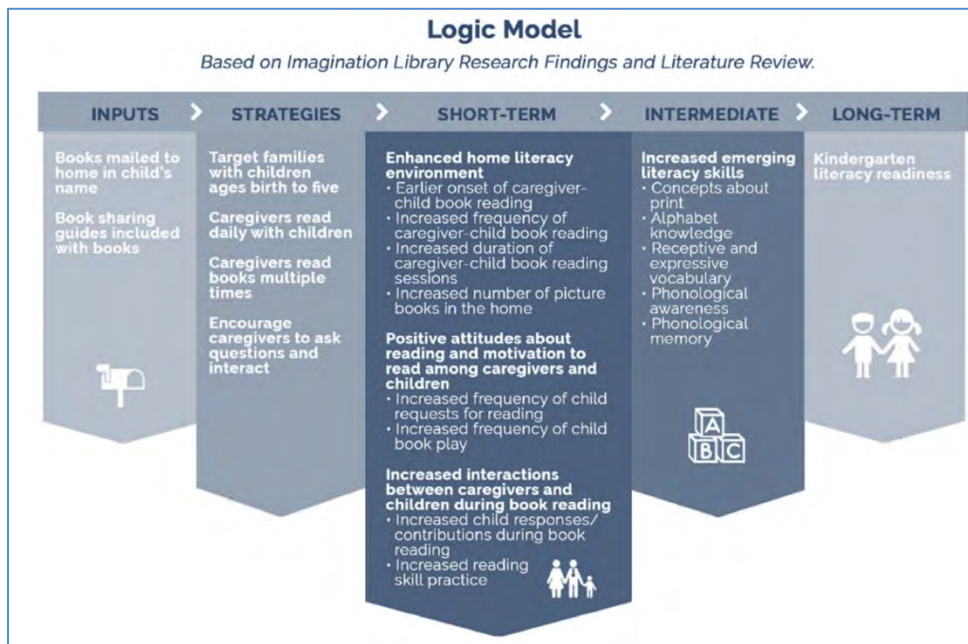
A significant number of children from lower-income families lack access to children's books at home. According to the US Department of Education, approximately 61% of children from lower-income families have no children's books in their homes. In lower-income neighborhoods, the ratio of books to children is one book for every 300 children, far below the ratio of 13 books per child in more affluent neighborhoods. Between 2021 and 2022, the number of households in poverty in Oregon increased by 1,879 (remaining at 12% below the FPL of all households), and the number of the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households increased more substantially by 17,386 to 33% of all households, a combined 45% (764,160) of households struggling to make ends meet.

In 2009, a study in eastern Tennessee investigated the relationship between Imagination Library students and their kindergarten peers on a Kindergarten Literacy Assessment. The study followed 3,352 children total, with 1,778 children participating in the program and 1,574 not participating in the program. The results revealed a significant difference between the performance of the Imagination Library alumni and the performance of their peers. The alumni scored higher percentages in the advanced performing categories and had lower percentages in the lower performing categories.

The study also compared the two student populations among various demographics found within the group. The subgroups included gender, race, income, and special needs. The results continued to show the students exposed to the Imagination Library outperformed the students who did not access the program.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The studies referenced above are just a fraction of many research projects showing that early reading experiences play a crucial role in preparing children for academic success, as a child's core brain development occurs during the first few years of life, shaping their ability to learn and think critically. Studies have linked greater home reading during the prekindergarten period with the later development of brain areas supporting mental imagery, narrative comprehension, and oral language skills (J. S. Hutton, 2015). Notably, parents who read one picture book with their children every day provide exposure to an estimated 78,000 words per year. Cumulatively, over the 5 years before kindergarten, children from literacy-rich homes hear 1.4 million more words during storybook reading than children who are never read to (J. Logan, 2019). Therefore, early reading experiences are crucial for children's cognitive development.



BUDGET NARRATIVE

Child Care Infrastructure Fund Technical Assistance Program

Early educational investments are severely underfunded and there is a shortage of affordable and accessible child care in Oregon. In The 2022 Oregon Child Care Deserts report by Oregon State University's Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, illustrates that there are 6 infants and toddlers for each child care slot that exists. A child care desert exists when there is a community with 3 or more children for a single child care slot. All counties except one are a child care desert for infants and toddlers and half of Oregon's counties are child care deserts for preschool-age children. In addition, early learning and care providers have limited finances to facilitate expansion of their child care environments and this severely limits the growth of child care in the state. High-quality early child care investment promotes regional economic growth by increasing the number of jobs available within the child care and construction workforce sectors and by providing consistent, accessible and reliable care that is necessary to allow parents to participate in the labor force. Quality early learning and care facilities that are developmentally appropriate, inclusive of children with disabilities, culturally relevant and responsive and environmentally healthy support child brain development and the well-being of children and early learning and child care staff. The development and investment in the Child Care Infrastructure Fund directly correlates with the need to provide resources that increase the availability of child care. The technical assistance program will provide business acumen supports to the diverse array of early learning and care programs seeking to apply for CCIF opportunities. Increasing the supply of early learning and care programs and sustaining those programs requires support and expertise in small business development. The funding for the development of the technical assistance program will allow FCF and NWNC to develop resources that directly address the needs of applicants hoping to create a business plan or apply for a planning grant. They are also poised to build resources for programs with complex goals of expanding child care services or opening new locations. The technical assistance will also be focused on supporting applicants once they are awarded funding through CCIF. The most vulnerable time for new child care programs is the first year of operation. FCF and NWNC are developing strategies to support programs in their first two years so they are more likely to sustain their operations.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Performance

Dolly Parton Imagination Library of Oregon





The Imagination Library of Oregon does not yet have a history of performance data because the state program was established in 2023-25. There are two main program outcomes that are tracked on an ongoing basis 1) full coverage for every county and zip code and 2) enrollment of 65% of the state’s eligible population.

Currently, 30 of 36 counties have countywide program coverage with full coverage for the remaining six projected by the end of 2023-25 (see below). Approximately 70% of children’s 0-5 homes are in the six counties that the statewide program will be expanding coverage.



BUDGET NARRATIVE

The enrollment of children in the program is also projected to increase to the 65% target as shown below:

Period	Total Registered Children	% Registered Children	Total Program Cost (in millions)
Prior to May 2024	50,000	25% 	\$0
2023-25 Goal	50,000-100,000	25%-50% 	\$1.7
2025-27 Goal	100,000-140,000	50%-65% 	\$3.8
2027-29 Goal and Beyond	140,000	65% 	\$4.2

Child Care Infrastructure Fund Technical Assistance Program

The technical assistance program does not yet have data on its history of performance. \$25 million in Lottery Bonds were sold in May 2024 and will be distributed by Business Oregon’s CCIF program this year, and the remaining \$25 million in Lottery Bonds will be available in the Spring of 2025. The first CCIF application process was released August 15, 2024. The technical assistance providers were selected by DELC and under contract by July 2024.

First Children's Finance has been actively engaging with child care providers through a series of focus groups aimed at understanding the experiences and challenges faced by those starting up or expanding child care businesses. The initial focus groups have provided valuable insights, including gratitude for the grant programs and a desire for more personalized, one-on-one support. FCF is addressing these needs by tailoring its outreach and technical assistance efforts to the different types and sizes of child care programs in the state. All types of child care programs have been encouraged to submit an application, with the initial round of funding prioritizing culturally specific programs and organizations. In addition to culturally specific programs and organizations, prioritization will be given to programs offering or expanding infant and toddler care, providing extended hour care, those located in child care deserts, and programs accepting subsidies. FCF and NWNC are currently working with early learning and care programs that are applying to expand their services, supporting them to develop plans that are realistic and timely, and connecting them to local resources in their communities so that they are able to meet application requirements.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Northwest Native Chamber is also working closely with Native child care programs to address the unique challenges they face, particularly those in Indigenous communities, where facility renovations often require specialized approaches due to systemic issues on reservations. The supports from each technical assistance provider includes CCIF application support, translation and interpretation support for culturally and linguistically specific child care programs, writing a business plan, creating a budget, business training and resources along with one-on-one consultation.

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

Funding for the Imagination Library of Oregon is authorized by the 2023 Regular Session, Senate Bill 5506, Section 53. The Department has launched the program but is requesting a legislative concept for the 2025 session to formally codify the program in Oregon law.

House Bill 3005 established the Child Care Infrastructure Fund and granted authority for the Department of Early Learning and Care to provide technical assistance to eligible applicants to the CCIF. Funding for DELC technical assistance to child care providers to access the Child Care Infrastructure Fund is authorized by Section 54 of Senate Bill 5506 (2023).

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

The Imagination Library of Oregon and technical assistance program for the Child Care Infrastructure Fund are funded with General Fund. The Other Early Learning Grants program does have some carryforward Other Fund limitation.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation

Program Overview

In their capacity-builder role, Early Learning Hubs work to expand the capacity of regional early childhood systems to be effective, coordinated and coherent while embedding racial, economic, and geographic equity and inclusion. One arm of this capacity-building role is through coordinating investments. The Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Program (KPI), which flows through the state’s 16 [Early Learning Hubs](#), invests in promising models for connecting early learning and K-3 education across the state. This program promotes community and school partnerships that result in measurable increases in children’s readiness for and confidence in kindergarten. This program funds direct, collaborative services for families and children preparing to enter kindergarten; alignment and coordination activities for early learning and K-12; and cross sector partnership-building facilitation on a local level that reaches beyond K-12 and early learning.

Program Funding Request

The 2025-27 Agency Request Budget for Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation is to maintain current service level with \$10,048,775 in total funds.

Biennium	General Funds	Other Funds	Federal Funds	Total Funds
2025-27 Agency Request Budget	\$10,048,775	\$0	\$0	\$10,048,775

Program Description

Oregon’s Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Fund (KPI) was authorized by the Oregon Legislature in 2014 to support innovative, community-driven work to improve children’s school readiness and success and to reduce opportunity gaps for the state’s most vulnerable children. KPI uses a framework for improving these outcomes known as the Prenatal-to-Grade 3 (P-3) approach. The focus of P-3 work is to build a system of aligned, coordinated supports from birth through third grade. Third grade is seen as a key benchmark based on the considerable research that demonstrates children who are meeting academic standards for reading and mathematics in third grade are more likely to be successful in school and to graduate from high school.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The Agency provides KPI funds to the state's 16 Early Learning Hubs ("Hubs"), which are given considerable local flexibility to implement innovative approaches (often blending and braiding other funding sources) in one or more of the following areas:

- Supporting kindergarten readiness skills in the context of strong and supportive relationships;
- Increasing family engagement in children's learning and connecting families and schools as well as families with each other;
- Providing professional development to early learning and/or elementary school professionals to improve knowledge and skills; and/or
- Increasing system alignment, connection, and collaboration between early learning, K-12 and other key partners in the P-3 system.

Early Learning Hubs utilize KPI grant funds for Agency-approved activities designed to promote "Ready Children, Ready Schools, and Ready Communities" for priority families in the region.

Program Justification and Link to Long Term Outcomes

KPI supports the Agency's Raise Up Oregon System Goal 3: All children are thriving in early childhood and beyond and Objective 16: Children and families experience supportive transitions and continuity of services across early learning and care and public education (K-12) settings. KPI supports successful and seamless transitions to kindergarten, which are associated with success during the early elementary years.

In 2017, the Agency contracted with Portland State University to conduct research demonstrating that KPI funds were being used to support the statewide goal of reducing disparities in kindergarten readiness for those from communities who have been historically underserved and under-resourced. Research confirmed that these funds were being used to support schools with larger proportions of economically disadvantaged students, Latino children, and children who are English Language Learners. In 2022, PSU published *Eight Years of Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation: Key Findings and Future Directions*. Overall, the data, in the form of surveys to participating families and educators, show that parents and caregivers feel they have improved their ability to support children during the transition into kindergarten. Educators report that shared professional learning opportunities have strengthened alignment between early learning and kindergarten classrooms.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Program Performance

Based on the number of post-KPI-event surveys Hubs collected, the number of families participating in the family engagement activities organized by the Hubs peaked just prior to the pandemic during the 2019-2020 school year. While the number of participating families dropped significantly during the start of the pandemic, data show a steady increase in participation during the 2022-2023 school year. The number of providers participating in the shared professional development events has followed a similar trend with a slight decline in 2022-23 compared with the prior year.

The Department of Early Learning and Care is required to complete a program evaluation. The evaluation for 2022, conducted by Portland State University, can be found at:

<https://www.oregon.gov/delc/Documents/2022%20KPI%20Retrospective%20Report%20FINAL%20FULL%202024-2-21.pdf>.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

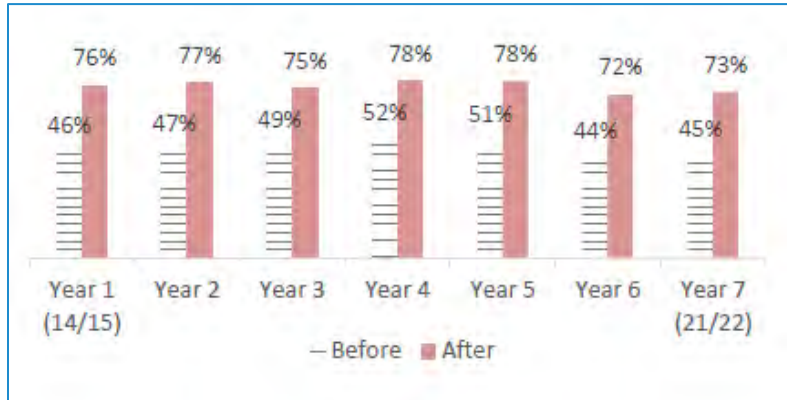
The table below provides an overview of the number of children, parents/caregivers, early learning providers and Kindergarten to Third grade teachers receiving KPI services from 2018 to 2023.

Fiscal Year	Children	Parents/Caregivers	Shared PD Total
Jan – Sept 2018	4,044	1,991	1157
Jan-Dec 2019	N/A	N/A	1156
2019-2020	7,210	5,235	766
2020-2021	2,268	4,222	367
2021-2022	4,404	4,215	2563
2022-2023	5,010	4,865	2123

Portland State University, Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

The table below focuses on literacy, and the percent of parents that definitely feel confident in knowing how to best promote their child's reading at home before and after the KPI-funded programs.



From Eight Years of Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation: Key Findings and Future Directors, 2022, Portland State University, Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services.

Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization

The statutory authority for the program resides in ORS 336.101 which established the Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation Program.

Describe the various funding streams that support the program

Funding for the Early Learning Kindergarten Readiness Partnership & Innovation Program (KPI) is an appropriation from the state General Fund.