



PROFILES: SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

State:	Oregon
Partnership name:	Early Learning Hubs
Web site(s):	http://oregonearlylearning.com/other-priorities/community-based-coordinators-of-early-learning-services-hubs/
Address:	Division of Early Learning 775 Summer St NE, Suite 300 Salem, OR 97301
Primary contact (name):	David Mandell, Early Learning Policy and Partnership Director, Division of Early Learning
Email:	David.p.mandell@state.or.us
Phone:	503-373-0071

1. Background



An Early Learning Hub is a coordinating body that pulls together resources focused on children and families in its defined service area. Under the Early Learning Hub model, all of the sectors that touch early childhood education—health care, early childhood educators, human and social services, K-12 school districts, and the private sector—have a common place to focus their efforts, resources, and strategies with a shared purpose. Hubs are designed to coordinate existing community services in a more direct, effective, and family-centric way. Hubs are not intended to become direct service providers themselves.

The Hubs grew out of a multiyear planning effort bringing together Oregon’s Governor with the state legislature and early childhood stakeholders. Initially a small bipartisan team including a doctor, a judge, a child advocate, a school superintendent, a foundation leader, and a close advisor to the governor, created recommendations through the Governor’s Early Childhood Design Team, and included the concept of a regionalized, cross-sector, community led structure for organizing early learning services toward kindergarten readiness. The Early Learning Hub concept was informed by the design of Parenting Education Hubs the launch and implementation of which has been funded through a foundation-led

initiative known as the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative. The first Parenting Education Hubs were established in 2010. A process team comprised of state agency staff, early learning experts, providers, and legislators met during the 2011 session, which led to the first of three pieces of legislation to define and create the Early Learning Hubs. The first piece of legislation, Senate Bill 909, among other things, created the Early Learning Council (ELC) to oversee the design, development, and implementation of an early learning system and included references to Hubs, then referred to as Accountability Hubs. In 2012, via HB 4165, the legislature directed an expanded ELC to take several steps towards the Hubs. In 2013, HB 2013 put in place the final pieces of statutory structure, timing, and process requirements for establishing the Early Learning Hubs.

The authorizing legislation is available at <http://www.oregon.gov/gov/docs/OEIB/hb2013.pdf>.

2. Mission and Goals

The Early Learning Hubs, which focus on early childhood education, health linkages, and family stability, are part of the State's 40-40-20 goal to build a seamless system of education from birth to college and career. The goal calls for 40 percent of students to receive a bachelor's degree or higher; 40 percent of students to receive an associate's degree or certificate; and the remaining 20 percent to earn a high school diploma. Early childhood is a critical strategy to realize the goals. To help realize its part in the Oregon 40-40-20 goals, the ELC has set the following 3 outcomes for its overall work:



- Children who are ready for kindergarten;
- Children who are raised in stable and attached families; and
- Systems that are integrated and aligned into one early learning system.

While the ELC is not prescribing a specific program model or approach for how a community chooses to get results for its children, there are several goals that are part of the Early Learning Hubs.

Many processes and strategies are determined at the regional hub level, but for consistency the Early Learning Hubs focus on the following goals:

- Outcomes, specifically, a shared set of outcomes. Progress metrics and targets will be set to locally appropriate levels, but all Early Learning Hubs are moving toward the same global outcomes;
- Improving results for the highest-risk children;
- Families and meaningful relationships with the people who are being served;
- Integration across the five sectors: K-12 education, health, social and human services, early childhood education, and business;
- Data use for continuous improvement; and
- Coordinating effective systems and funds.

3. Governance and Partnership Members

At the state level, the ELC is authorized via state law to oversee the Early Learning Hubs. Early Learning Hubs are self-determined at the regional level. The State's authorizing law, HB 2013, allows for as many as 16 hubs in a State with 36 counties, thus requiring cross-county collaboration with each community to decide which will serve as the backbone organization. An emphasis was placed on using an existing organizations such as United Way, Educational Service District, or Community Care Organization. As of Summer 2014, 14 organizations had been selected with only one new nonprofit created as the Hub itself.

Hubs define their own geographic area, and demonstrate certain governance and partnership requirements in their applications to serve as Early Learning Hubs. This includes a transparent process for selecting the members and partners, and includes both public and private entities, locally based parents and service recipients, human social service providers, child care providers, health care providers, and representatives of local governments from the service area as specified by the state law. In the initial applicant round to establish the Early Learning Hubs, all of the organizations that applied demonstrated the required cross-sector engagement to support governance, planning, and implementation.

4. Funding and Other Resources



The Legislature allocated up to \$4.7 million in General Fund dollars to be distributed to the Hubs over the biennium funding period that Oregon uses. Each Hub was funded at \$15.46 for each at-risk child they proposed to reach. The Early Learning Division developed contracts with each of the Hubs specifying the activities they would engage in, how they would use their funds, and how they would keep administrative expenses below 15 percent. The Hubs' contracts also specify targets for seven metrics.

In addition to the direct allocation, Hubs have been among the entities eligible to apply for a number of strategic grants. These included the Kindergarten Partnership Fund, focused on building linkages between early childhood programs and elementary schools, Early Literacy Grants, and the Focused Child Care Network; all of which were

awarded to existing Hubs on a noncompetitive basis. These funds were intended to help the Hubs serve as catalysts for community partnerships. For most of these grants, the assumption is that the Hubs will work with and fund community partners, rather than engaging in the activities directly.

5. Activities

The Early Learning Hubs are not intended to be direct service providers and are required to carry out the following activities:

- Coordinate the provision of early learning services to the community served by the Hub;
- Include service providers, parents, community members, county governments, school districts, and other stakeholders in the creation of the Hub;
- Align services coordinated by the Hub with the services provided by public schools;
- Align services coordinated by the Hub with services provided by Coordinated Care Organizations and county public health departments;
- Integrate efforts across health, K-12 education, human services, early education, and the business community using coordinated and transparent budgeting, and through a governing body with representation of each of the above sectors as well as parents of children using early learning services;
- Demonstrate an ability to improve results for at-risk children;
- Leverage additional private and public funds including in-kind support; and
- Keep administrative overhead at 15 percent or less.

6. Evaluation and Outcomes

Hub contracts include yearly targets for the following metrics:

Kindergarten Readiness:

- Increase the number of children served by high-quality early learning environments as measured by the Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
- Improve readiness of kindergarten as measured by the statewide Kindergarten Readiness Assessment.

Family Stability:

- Increase the number of children who receive developmental screening prior to age 3; and
- Increase the number of children with access to a patient centered primary care home.

System Coordination

- Increase the number of at-risk children served across the system;
- Decrease the cost of service (decreasing administrative overhead); and
- Decrease the age for onset of services.

The State has contracted with Education Northwest to conduct a qualitative evaluation of the Early Learning Hubs. As of 2014, Education Northwest is in the process of interviewing Hub participants and other stakeholders.