



Connecting Health and Education

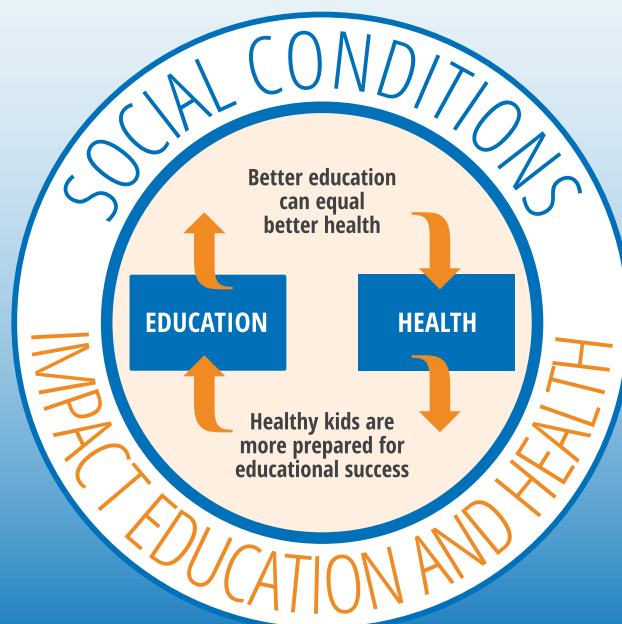
Building Systems for Thriving Kids and Families

Oregon needs public health, health care, and education systems that work together to create the best possible conditions for young children to prosper. Healthy children are more likely to succeed in school, and students who do well in school are more likely to enjoy lifelong health. Understanding the connections between education and health is essential for making Oregon a place where young kids can thrive in school and in life.

Home and family environments, community and neighborhood conditions, and socioeconomic status—the social conditions that impact how people live, grow, learn, play, work, and age—shape health risks and outcomes and can predict quality of life in later years. These social conditions are known as the social determinants of health (SDOH), and they can significantly affect how a child grows and develops.

Young children are especially sensitive to the social determinants of health. Early childhood, starting in the prenatal phase, is a critical period of rapid development that lays the foundation for all learning and well-being. Children who experience trauma or are impacted by adverse experiences such as abuse and neglect are far more likely to experience poor health and economic outcomes as adults.

In Oregon, there is now broad recognition that tackling the social determinants of health is essential to ensuring Oregonians are stable, healthy, and thriving. Currently, some of our state systems are transforming to address the social determinants of health.

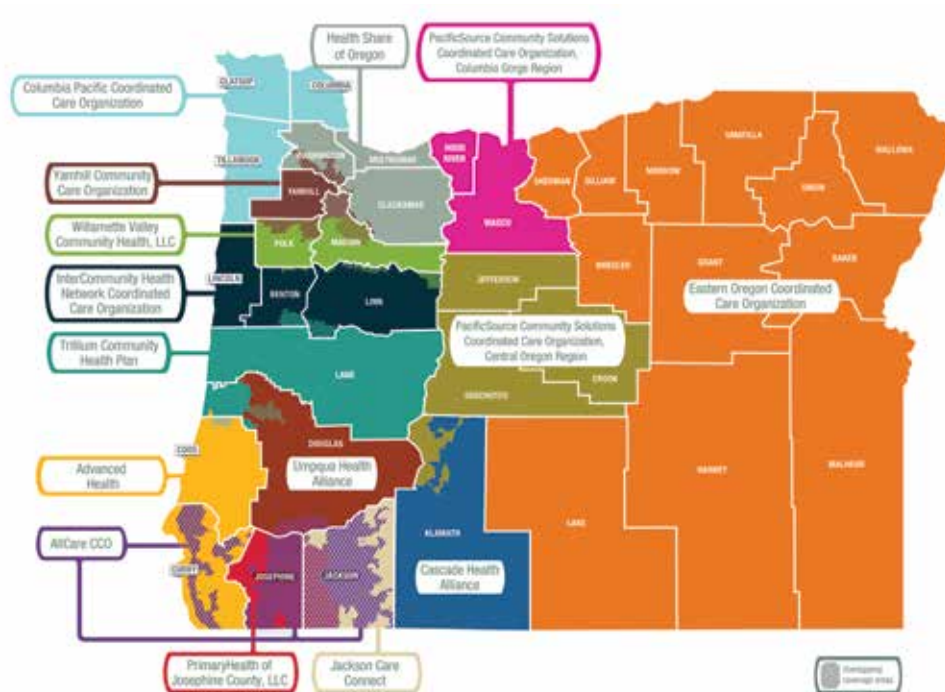


Health System Change

In 2012, Oregon began transforming its health care delivery system by launching regional coordinated care organizations (CCOs). A CCO is a network of all types of health providers (physical, mental, and dental) who

agree to work together in their local community to provide comprehensive and seamlessly connected health services to people who receive health care coverage through Medicaid.

15 CCOs Serve Communities in Oregon



Since launching CCOs, Oregon has achieved great successes in reducing spending on health care and improving health outcomes for Oregonians.

Examples include:¹

- **Developmental screenings** in the first 36 months of life have increased from 21 percent in 2011 to 69 percent in 2017.
- **The number of children in foster care** receiving the timely preventive care they need increased from 28 percent in 2014 to 83 percent in 2017.
- **Well-child visits** in the first 15 months of life have increased from 55 percent in 2014 to 60 percent in 2017.
- **Fewer Oregonians** are visiting the emergency room.
- **More Oregonians** report their health is good, very good, or excellent.

Oregon is planning the next phase for CCOs, called CCO 2.0. Governor Kate Brown has called for a strong focus on social determinants of health and health equity among her top priorities for CCO 2.0. The Oregon Health Policy Board has gathered input from communities across the state about their greatest needs related to social determinants of health to inform policy development. Primary issues include housing and homelessness, hunger, transportation, education, and access to health services.

Children's Institute spearheaded one effort to motivate CCOs to focus on health measures that can improve children's health and school readiness. The purpose of the work has been to drive health system behavior change, investments, and cross-sector collaboration to meaningfully impact kindergarten readiness. Read more about this effort here: childinst.org/our-work/health-and-kindergarten-readiness

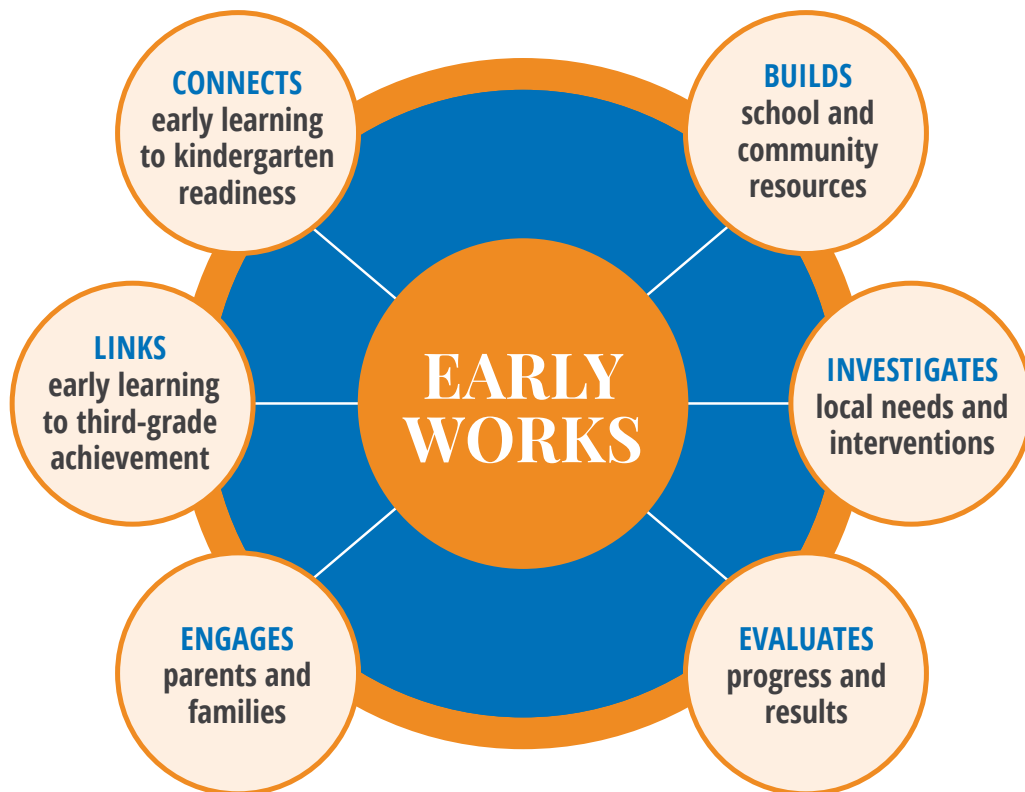
Education System Change

Children’s Institute has learned about the importance of embedding health and socioeconomic resources into a school setting from our Early Works initiative. At Earl Boyles Elementary School—one of our Early Works demonstration sites—a school-based community health worker, a housing and family advocate, and a financial capabilities coordinator all work directly with

families to address the social determinants of health that impact children’s learning. Read more about our Early Works initiative here: childinst.org/our-work/early-works



A New Approach to Education and Healthy Development



Several school districts in Oregon are also working to implement trauma-informed practices in schools. This work includes embedding opportunities for all children to develop strong social and emotional skills as part of learning in school, and providing interventions and connections to community-based resources for young children who have experienced trauma and instability.

The education system, spanning early learning through high school, is also recognizing the impact of the social determinants of health and is seeking to address the

barriers students face outside the classroom, to support their success in school. One example is Oregon’s Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan. With the federal passage of ESSA, states are required to develop and implement a plan for improving educational outcomes. Oregon’s ESSA plan includes a focus on addressing chronic absence by understanding and mitigating the barriers to attendance many students face, which may include poor health and housing instability.

Policy Recommendations

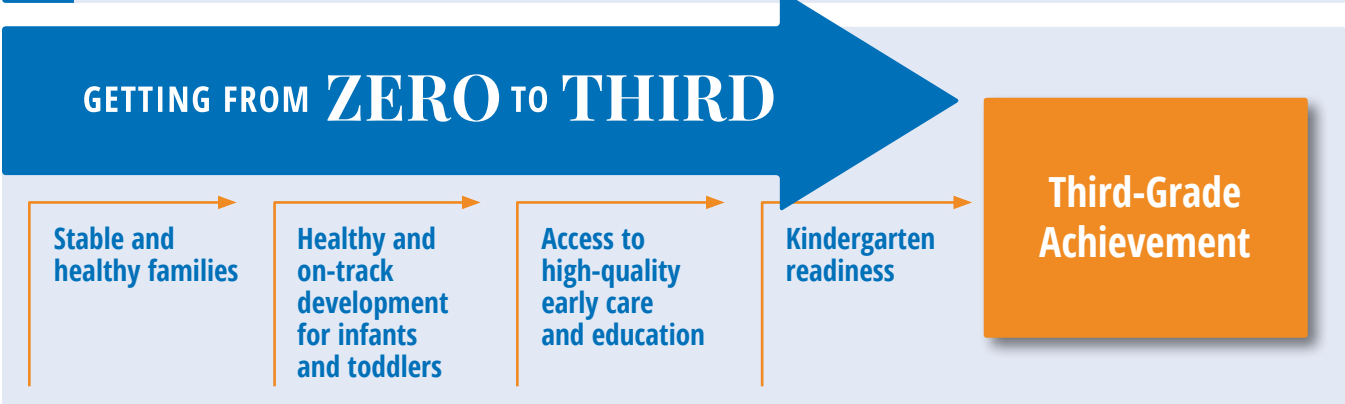


Every child should be healthy, safe, and ready to succeed in school. Kindergarten readiness and reading at grade level by the end of third grade remain two of the best predictors of high school graduation and later success.

To see improvements in education and health outcomes for children in Oregon, we must invest in systemic improvements that drive population-level changes across the state.

Policy Recommendations

- Ensure** Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) target social determinants of health and investments in services and supports for young children where they will have the greatest impact.
- Develop** new policies that will require or incentivize CCOs to invest more in the practices, partnerships, and community services that address social determinants and improve health outcomes.
- Launch** universal home visiting to connect families with critical services from birth.
- Expand** Preschool Promise and fully fund Oregon Pre-kindergarten to improve access to early care and education and promote lifelong health and well-being.
- Learn more** about our policy recommendations online at childinst.org/2019-policy-and-advocacy



We have work to do. Join us! childinst.org/get-involved



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Our mission is moving research to action by promoting cost-effective public and private investments in our youngest children, birth through third grade.

Citations and Credits

1 2017 CCO performance report.
Photos taken at Liberty Elementary in Tillamook and Family Building Blocks in Salem. Photography by Rafael Otto.