



Preschool Promise

High-Quality Preschool for More Oregon Kids

Oregon passed legislation in 2015 to create Preschool Promise, a high-quality preschool program for low-income children ages 3 and 4. The program began serving children and families in 2016 and complements federal Head Start and Oregon Pre-kindergarten (OPK)¹ by serving families at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold.

The legislation ensures that more low-income children across the state have access to high-quality preschool to better prepare them to be active, engaged learners throughout school. The program also recognizes that high-quality preschool can be offered by a range of early learning providers in settings such as public schools, child care centers, Head Start classrooms, and by community-based organizations. This mixed-delivery preschool model supports greater parent choice.

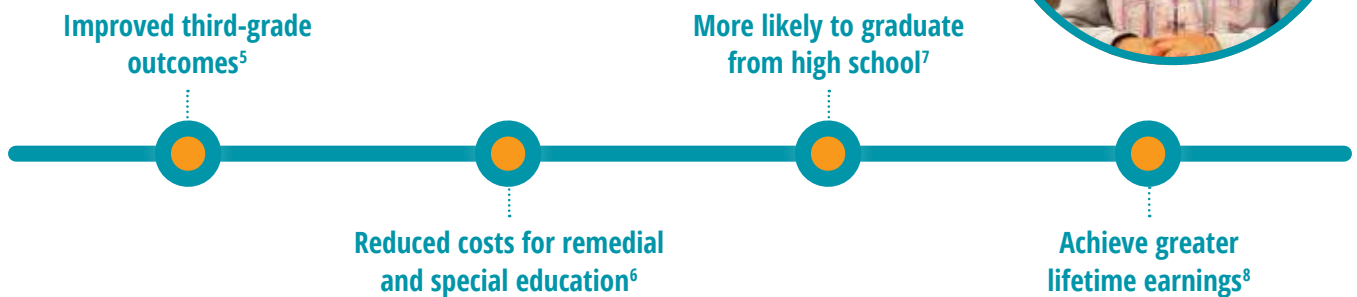
Oregon's current preschool investments reach too few eligible low-income families. Low-income children who lack access to high-quality early learning can be up to 20 months behind their higher income peers by age 4.² The preschool years also represent a critical period of growth for a child's brain and overall development.

By investing in high-quality preschool, Oregon can narrow opportunity gaps before kindergarten and help kids prepare for school and stay on track to meet third grade benchmarks, key indicators for predicting high school graduation.³



Benefits of High-Quality Preschool

Early learning investments are the single most cost-effective way to close the opportunity gap and improve outcomes for children.⁴



Quality Counts

High-quality preschool programs nurture the potential of young children. They provide early education, improve school and life outcomes for low-income children, and can significantly close opportunity and achievement gaps. Multiple studies have identified the standards and practices that have the greatest impact and ensure continuous, quality improvement. These are all part of Preschool Promise.



SCHOOL-DAY ACCESS

A 6-hour day of preschool has been associated with greater impact than a half-day and better supports working families.



WELL-EDUCATED AND SUPPORTED TEACHERS

Preschool teachers with relevant experience, skills, and professional supports provide better language development and early literacy activities.



1:10 ADULT-CHILD RATIO

Classrooms with a minimum of a lead teacher and an assistant and no more than 20 students are associated with better outcomes for children.



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

Teaching that is attuned to the cultural and linguistic strengths and needs of children and families helps students succeed in school.



ADEQUATE TEACHER COMPENSATION

Increased teacher compensation improves program quality and child outcomes, and decreases teacher turnover.



INCLUSIVE

High-quality programs have support and resources for children with developmental disabilities and delays.



PROVEN CURRICULUM

Research-based curriculum that uses aligned, age-appropriate standards helps educators and early learners achieve better outcomes.



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Job-embedded professional learning helps teachers, leaders, and other staff stay current on best practices for teaching and supporting student growth.

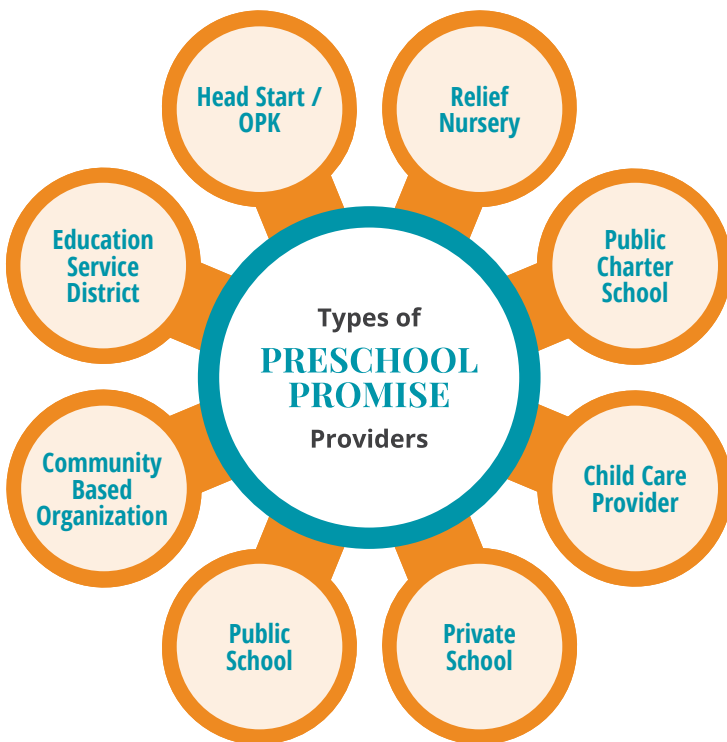
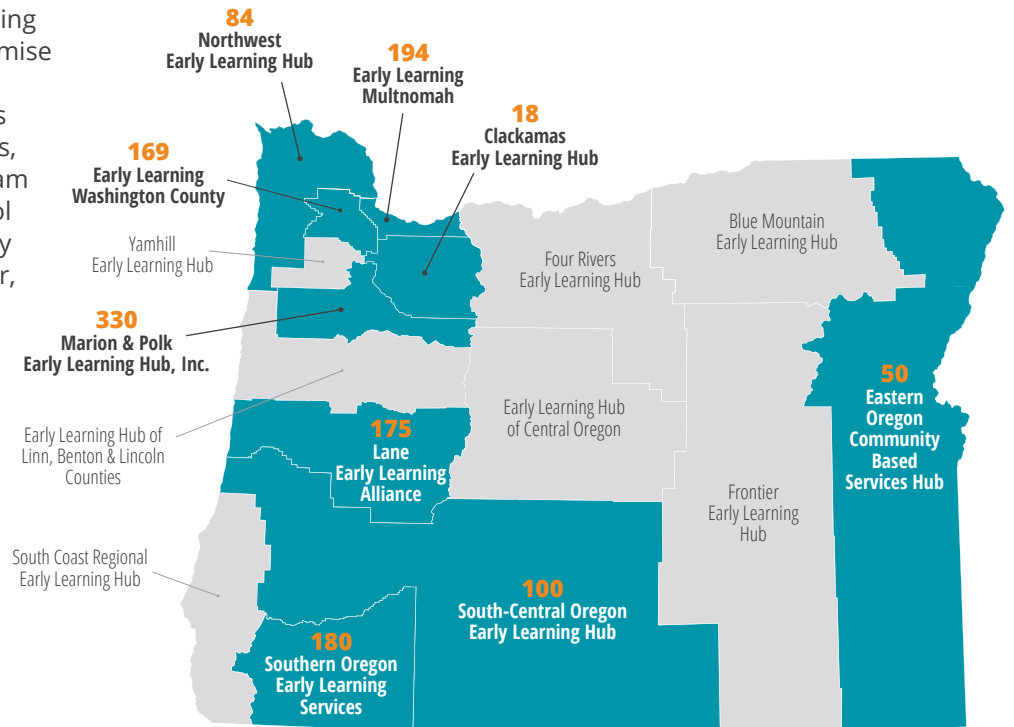


FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Programs that engage families as partners improve school readiness, parent education, family health, and connections to other community supports.

Quality Across the State

Nine of Oregon's 16 Early Learning Hubs coordinate Preschool Promise contracts, support community collaboration to meet the needs of enrolled children and families, and help providers meet program goals. There are 1,300 Preschool Promise slots, distributed widely across the state in rural, frontier, and urban locations.



Preschool Promise aims to provide all children living at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold an opportunity to attend high-quality preschool. To increase access to preschool, Preschool Promise uses a mixed-delivery approach that includes eight different types of providers.

Even with the expanded access to publicly funded preschool, only 12 percent of 4-year-olds in Oregon are enrolled, ranking the state 31st out of 43 states reporting on public preschool access.⁹

Policy Recommendations

Every child in Oregon deserves an opportunity to succeed. Oregon's investment in Preschool Promise is an excellent step to expand access to high-quality preschool for low-income children. Serving 1,300 low-income children each year is a start, but Oregon needs to reach 30,000 additional kids across the state. Early childhood experiences build the foundation for success in school and in life. Preschool Promise is a strategic investment in Oregon's future and a smart economic investment that can reduce future costs for special education and remediation. Additionally, investments in preschool can also increase the impact of dollars spent on K-12 education.

Key Recommendations

Expand preschool to serve an additional 10,000 kids by 2020.

Fully fund Head Start and Oregon Pre-kindergarten.

Strengthen the early childhood workforce.

Additional Steps Include:

- Raise salaries and per-child spending in Oregon Pre-kindergarten to be in line with Preschool Promise.
- Develop pathways for early childhood educators to earn college credits and continuing education through scholarships and improved access to higher education programs.
- Increase funding for Early Childhood Special Education to ensure we're ready to meet the needs of children.
- Ensure Early Learning Hubs and the state Early Learning Division have the capacity to effectively support preschool providers, partner with parents, and monitor impact.

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 Head Start and OPK primarily serve children up to 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold.
- 2 Center on Enhancing Early Learning Outcomes. Access to High-Quality Early Care and Education: Readiness and Opportunity Gaps in America (May 2014).
- 3 Annie E. Casey Foundation. Early Warning! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters (2010).
- 4 Minervino, J. (2014).
- 5 Campbell et al. (2002); Schweinhart et al. (2005).
- 6 Temple and Reynolds (2007).
- 7 Campbell et al. (2002); Schweinhart et al. (2005).
- 8 Masse and Barnett (2007).
- 9 NIEER (2015).

Masthead photo on page 1 courtesy St. Helens School District. All other photos by Rafael Otto taken at Tillamook Early Learning Center and Liberty Elementary School.