



# OREGON'S STARTING FIVE

## Five Early Childhood Programs Making a Difference for Oregon's At-risk Children

Many Oregon children are growing up in adverse environments that jeopardize their ability to be successful in school and later life.

▶ **20%**

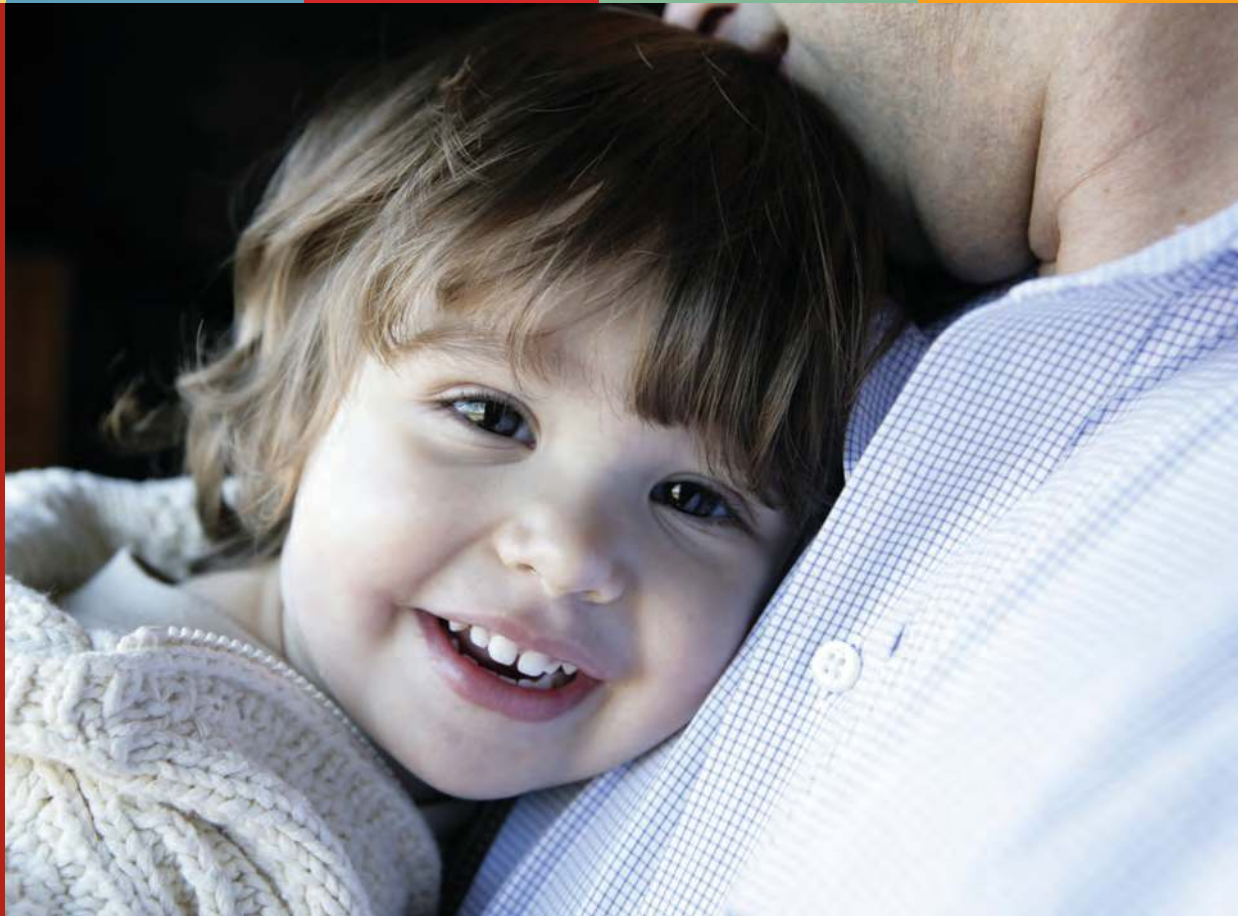
of Oregon's children under the age of 5 are growing up in poverty.

▶ **42%**

are exposed to one or more serious risk factors associated with failure in school.

▶ **49%**

of substantiated cases of child abuse and neglect in Oregon involve children under age 6.



Oregon's prevention-focused early childhood programs are doing good work; however, the number of vulnerable children in Oregon outstrips the capacity of these programs to serve those most in need. [Read more.](#) ▶

## STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Science confirms what common sense tells us: the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of infants, toddlers and preschoolers provides the foundation for healthy development in later childhood and adolescence. Yet in Oregon, far too many children grow up in environments that jeopardize their ability to be successful in school and later life. The stresses of poverty, parental depression and social isolation, for example, can impede the healthy development of young children.

### Power to the Parents

The strength of the relationship between parents and their children is the most vital and basic ingredient for building strong social, emotional and cognitive skills. Nonetheless, many parents want and need help making sure their children achieve their full potential.

### Five Programs Making a Difference

The five research-based programs profiled here serve young at-risk children and their families. Each program has a significant presence in Oregon, but collectively they do not have the resources to fully meet the needs of the populations they serve. The programs use age-specific and risk-specific strategies, directing resources to meet the particular needs of individual children and families.

### More is Needed

Make no mistake — these five programs alone cannot ensure the positive development of young children. Early screening and identification of children who are at risk should be more widely available. Families need access to affordable, high-quality child care, proper nutrition and appropriate health care. A quality education, paired with age-appropriate youth programs, is needed to build on the gains made in the early years.

### Make it Your Business

As good as these five programs are, they serve far too few children, and the consequences of not meeting the developmental needs of children are everybody's business. Pick your issue — **economic competitiveness, poverty, crime** or Oregon's growing **achievement gap** and staggering **high school dropout rate** — the most effective and least expensive answer to address each of these problems is comprehensive early childhood development programs for all children, starting with those most in need.

*Statistics on front cover: Oregon Department of Education, National Center for Children in Poverty and NPC Research*

**“High-quality early interventions promote schooling, reduce crime, reduce teenage pregnancy, foster workforce productivity, and promote adult health through multiple channels.”**

— James J. Heckman,  
Nobel Memorial Prize-Winning Economist,  
University of Chicago



## FIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD

### EARLY HEAD START

**Target populations:** Children prenatal to age 3 and their families; 100% of federal poverty level and/or diagnosed disability

**Number served:** 1,700 children; about 6% of income-eligible population

**Geographic reach:** 15 programs across the state

**Funding:** Mostly federal funding, \$1 million in first-time state funding allocated in 2010

**Evidence:** Randomized study found positive impact on children's social, emotional and cognitive development as well as improved parenting skills

Early Head Start programs provide developmentally enriching educational environments as well as group socialization experiences and home visits that support positive parenting and child development. This three-part focus on promoting child development, supporting parents and building strong child-parent relationships is at the heart of its success. An estimated 28,000 income-eligible children are not served due to a lack of funding.

### HEALTHY START

**Target populations:** First-time parents and their children up to age 3 who are at risk for abuse and neglect

**Number served:** Serving less than half of eligible families

**Geographic reach:** 35 of 36 counties

**Funding:** State funding through Oregon Commission on Children and Families, with 25% local contribution

**Evidence:** Evaluation of outcome data found that the rate for substantiated reports of abuse and neglect for children whose families receive Healthy Start home visits was almost half that of the general population of Oregon children under the age of 3. In addition, after 6 months of service, 92% of parents report reading regularly to their young children (3 times a week or more).

Healthy Start is a statewide, voluntary, family-support and parent-education home-visiting program with the goals of preventing child abuse and promoting school readiness. Each year Healthy Start screens about 10,000 families and their first-born child, of which 2,500 to 3,000 receive ongoing home visits from trained professionals. Trained home visitors support families by educating them about child development and building parenting skills. Healthy Start is fully accredited by Healthy Families America.



# INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PROGRAMS

## RELIEF NURSERIES

- Target populations:** Families with children 6 weeks old to kindergarten entry who are at high risk for abuse and neglect
- Number served:** Fewer than 1,000 children and families
- Geographic reach:** 11 programs across the state, 4 additional programs in development
- Funding:** Mostly private philanthropy, 30% state funding through Oregon Commission on Children and Families
- Evidence:** Evaluation of outcome data found that Relief Nurseries strengthened family functioning and reduced the number of risk factors associated with abuse and neglect in the families served

Relief Nurseries prevent abuse and neglect by providing comprehensive services to families with young children that are experiencing multiple stresses. Relief Nurseries strengthen parenting skills and build resilience in children through comprehensive services that include parenting education, mental health services, respite care and therapeutic preschool classrooms.

## EARLY INTERVENTION / EARLY CHILDHOOD SPECIAL EDUCATION

- Target populations:** Children birth to kindergarten entry with a diagnosed disability
- Number served:** 10,000 children
- Geographic reach:** Statewide through 9 Education Service Districts
- Funding:** 80% state, 20% federal
- Evidence:** As a result of EI/ECSE interventions, many children require fewer special education services in kindergarten and later grades

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education (EI/ECSE) provides services and family support to over 10,000 children under the age of 6 with diagnosed disabilities, such as deaf/blindness, autism spectrum disorder, developmental delay or communication disorder. Working with a team of specialists and the child's parents, each child receives an Individual Family Services Plan (IFSP) to support his or her development. By federal mandate, every child with a diagnosed disability is entitled to services. EI/ECSE services, while coordinated by the Oregon Department of Education, are provided in a variety of settings, such as the child's home or a Head Start classroom, depending on what is best for the child.

## OREGON HEAD START PREKINDERGARTEN

- Target populations:** 3- and 4-year-olds and their families; 100% of federal poverty level and/or diagnosed disability
- Number served:** 12,600, 64% of income-eligible population
- Geographic reach:** 31 programs covering all 36 counties
- Funding:** 50% federal, 50% state
- Evidence:** National randomized study found that Head Start cut in half the achievement gap at kindergarten entry

For more than 40 years, Head Start has prepared children living in poverty for success in school. Head Start, which combines early education classroom experience with comprehensive family support services and health care, has been shown to cut the achievement gap, reduce juvenile delinquency and increase high school graduation rates. Oregon's Head Start program is a unique state-federal collaboration that operates in every county in Oregon and serves more than 12,000 children. Due to a lack of funding, more than 6,000 three- and four-year-olds living in poverty do not have access to Head Start.



CHILDREN'S



INSTITUTE

*Promoting wise investments in early childhood to prepare young children for success in school and life.*

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**Ready for School** is a statewide campaign to improve the lives of Oregon's children and build a stronger economy with wise public investments in high-quality early childhood programs. The campaign is led by a coalition of top business and community leaders who have made it their business to better prepare at-risk children for success in school and later life. The campaign is informed by a growing body of social, scientific and economic research supporting wise investments in early childhood.

**Ready for School** is powered by research, communications and staffing from the Children's Institute.

**Ready for School**



**start small  
GROW GREAT**

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Additional copies are available at [www.childinst.org](http://www.childinst.org) or by contacting the Children's Institute.

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