

Early Childhood Programs in Oregon

Did You Know? There are 242,700 children between the ages of 0–5 living in Oregon.

Oregon is laying the foundation for a strong early learning and care system. One that helps every child thrive from the very start. To make this happen, the state offers a range of programs that meet families where they are and advance key goals, including:

- **Children are raised in healthy, stable, and attached families**
- **Children are ready for Kindergarten**
- **Oregon's early learning system is aligned, coordinated, and family centered**

Oregon's early learning and care system is designed to be flexible, inclusive, and responsive to families' needs.

What to know about Oregon's early learning and care system:

- **It's not one-size-fits-all.** Oregon uses a mixed-delivery model, offering different types of programs to support children and families in ways that work best for them.
- **Quality is a priority.** Programs strive to be developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, and inclusive of children with disabilities.
- **Participation is voluntary.** Families choose whether to take part in the programs.
- **Programs complement each other.** Families may benefit from more than one program. Ideally, programs coordinate to best serve children and families.
- **Some programs are universal, others are targeted.** While some are open to all families, others have eligibility requirements based on federal or state law.
- **Demand exceeds availability.** Many programs can't serve every interested family due to limited funding, staffing, and space—so participation is often prioritized.

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The next few pages highlight Oregon's early care and education programs, aligned and coordinated systems, and family services.

Early Care and Education Programs	
Designed for ages 0–3	Designed for ages 3–5
Early Head Start (DELIC) Intensive comprehensive child development and family support services to infants and toddlers and their families. Can be offered through home visits, classrooms, or combination. Funding: Federal funding to local programs Eligibility: Mostly <100% federal poverty level	Head Start (DELIC) Helps young children prepare to succeed in school and promotes children's development through services that support early learning, health, and family well-being. Funding: Federal funding to local programs Eligibility: Mostly <100% federal poverty level
Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten – OPK (DELIC) This is Oregon's state investment in Early Head Start & Head Start. Funding: State (General Fund) Eligibility: Mostly <100% federal poverty level	
Early Intervention & Early Childhood Special Education – EI/ECSE (ODE) Provides a seamless system to support the development and educational needs of children with diagnosed disability and delay, ages 0–5, and their families. Funding: Federal, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funding parts B & C and state funding (General Fund) Eligibility: Diagnosed disability or significant developmental delay	
Employment Related Day Care – ERDC (DELIC) Helps families that are working, in school, or addressing other family well-being needs to afford child care. Funding: Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) & state funding Eligibility: 200% federal poverty level	
Baby Promise (DELIC) Provides infant and toddler child care to low-income families through contracts with child care providers Funding: CCDBG (Child Care & Development Block Grant) Eligibility: 200% federal poverty level	Preschool Promise (DELIC) Provides free, quality preschool to low-income families through grants to preschool providers. Funding: State Eligibility: 200% federal poverty level

Early Care and Education Programs (continued)

Designed for ages 0–3	Designed for ages 3–5
	Early Childhood Equity Fund (DELC) Supports culturally specific school-readiness programs such as parent-child groups, parenting education, early literacy & native literacy, and Native language preservation. Funding: State Eligibility: Historically underserved children & families
	Kindergarten Partnership & Innovation Fund (DELC) Connects early learning with K-12 through parent engagement and summer transition to kindergarten. Funding: State Eligibility: Open to all families

Aligned and Coordinated Systems

Designed for ages 0–3	Designed for ages 3–5
Early Learning Hubs 16 locally organized Hubs coordinate early learning and care and promote cross-sector partnerships to create local systems that are aligned, coordinated, and family-centered. Funding: State	
Child Care Resources Recruit, train and promote retention of a high quality, diverse Early Learning and Child Care Workforce through professional development and collaboration. Funding: State & federal CCDBG	
Department of Early Learning & Care (DELC): DELC is responsible for providing high quality early learning and care services to children and families in Oregon. DELC works closely with other state agencies, local governments, schools, child care providers, parents, and other stakeholders to ensure that the best possible early learning experiences are available for all children in Oregon.	

Family Support Programs

Designed for ages 0–3	Designed for ages 3–5
Universally offered nurse home visits (OHA) Families can choose to receive up to 3 visits from a nurse in their home to check in, connect with desired support. Funding: Medicaid & state match, insurance, OHA Eligibility: Open to all families	
Intensive home visiting (DELIC, ODHS, OHA) Families meet ~weekly with skilled home visitor to set family & child goals and work toward them. Oregon has multiple programs: Healthy Families Oregon, Nurse Family Partnership, Early Head Start (home visiting model), Family Spirit, and Parents as Teachers. Funding: Federal (MIECHV & Medicaid), DELIC, OHA, ODHS Eligibility: Based on risk factors	
Relief Nurseries (DELIC) Relief Nurseries provide children, birth through age five, and their families with wraparound support to strengthen infant and early childhood mental health, prevent child abuse, and avoid unnecessary foster care. The unique Relief Nursery model combines parent education, home visits, and therapeutic classrooms at nearly 40 sites across Oregon. Funding: State & local match (Relief Nurseries provide a minimum 25% match for state funding), philanthropy Eligibility: Based on risk factors	
Parenting Education (DELIC, ODHS, OHA) Provides families with free parenting classes, resources, and events to support reliable, responsive, and sensitive parenting. Funding: Funded through philanthropy and state funding Eligibility: Open to all families	

Oregon's Child Care Landscape

In 2025, Oregon State University released a report mapping Oregon's child care supply by age group and percentage of publicly funded slots.

Public funding plays a major role in building Oregon's child care supply.

Without it, **all 36 counties** would be child care deserts for infants and toddlers (ages 0-2) and **28 counties** would be (ages 3-5) child care deserts for preschool aged children (ages 3-5)!

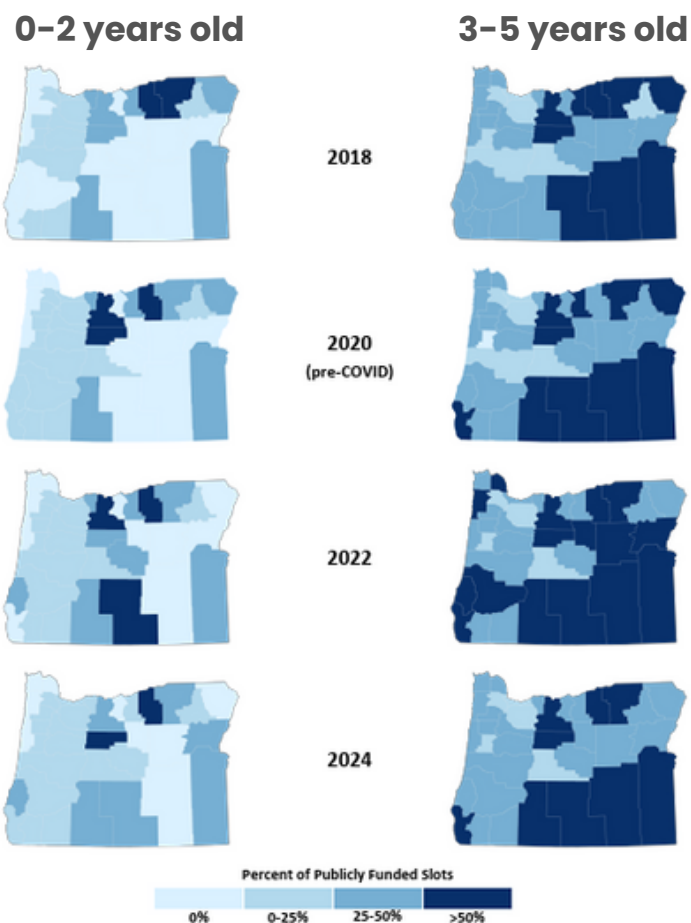
Child Care Desert

A community with three or more children for a single child care slot.

Oregon's economy loses \$1.4 billion annually due to the infant-toddler child care crisis

Public Funding Over Time

Percent of Regulated Child Care Slots that are Publicly Funded by Age Group



Maps from Oregon Child Care Desert Reports prepared by Oregon Child Care Research Partnership, Oregon State University. **For full reports, see** health.oregonstate.edu/early-learners/supply



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