



**Early Learning Council
Early Learning Division**

2013 Government to Government Report

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Early Learning Council

The Early Learning Council is the governing body overseeing the Early Learning System, as part of the 40/40/20 education goal. The Early Learning Council guides efforts to streamline state programs, provides policy direction to meet early learning goals statewide and provides oversight for services supporting children ages 0 through 6 across the state.

The Council was created through Senate Bill 909 in 2001, and further directed through House Bill 4165 in 2012. The Council currently consists of 18 members appointed by the Governor:

- Pam Curtis, Chair, Deputy Director, Center for Evidence Based Policy, Oregon Health and Sciences University
- Bobbie Weber, Research Associate, Family Policy Program, College of Public Health and Human Sciences, Oregon State University.
- Janet Dougherty-Smith, former Director, Early Childhood Services, Clackamas County Education Service District
- Norm Smith, attorney, President Emeritus, the Ford Family Foundation
- Marlene Yesquin, attorney, Black Chapman Webber and Stevens, Medford School District Board Member
- Jim Tierney, Executive Director, Community Action Team
- Harriet Adair, Regional Administrator, Portland Public Schools
- Dana Hargunani, Child Health Director, Oregon Health Authority
- Lynne Saxton, Executive Director, Christie Care – Youth Villages of Oregon
- Eva Rippeteau, Political Coordinator, Oregon AFSCME
- Vikki Bishop, Early Childhood Program Manager, the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde
- Kim Williams, Director, North Central ESD Early Education
- Charles McGee, Executive Director, Black Parent Initiative
- Rob Saxton, Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Oregon Department of Education
- Christa Rude, State Director, Head Start Collaboration

Early Learning Division

In 2013, House Bill 3234 (now Oregon Laws 2013 Chapter 624) established the Early Learning Division within the Department of Education, and established the Division's purpose as "ensuring that children enter school ready to succeed," by building out and staffing the state Early Learning System. In addition to moving Early Learning Council staff into the Department of Education, this legislation moved the entire Office of Child Care out of the Employment D

This legislation established that while the Division is functionally under the Department of Education, the Early Learning Council remains the governing body for the Division.

The Early Learning System's mission under the Early Learning Council and Early Learning Division is simple:

- Get Oregon's children to kindergarten ready to succeed and to third grade ready to read on grade level.
- Ensure parents have the support and resources necessary to create a positive family environment.
- Integrate resources and services statewide into a coordinated system for families.

The Early Learning Division administers the funds for early learning programs including Oregon Pre-Kindergarten, Healthy Families Oregon, licensed child care, Employment Related Child Care (child care subsidy), and Oregon Relief Nurseries.

In addition to program funding, the Early Learning Division is currently focused on a set of system-building initiatives taking the place of the former Commission on Children and Families system. These initiatives include the launch and implementation of Early Learning Hubs, a focus on early literacy, building a strong connection to K-3 education, improving the quality of early education settings (licensed child care) and building a stronger connection to health care. For each of these new systems-focused initiatives, the Division is working with the Oregon Department of Education's Indian Education Specialist to ensure each Tribe has access to and involvement in the creation of a seamless early childhood education system.

Early Learning Programs:

Title IV-B (2) Promoting Safe and Stable Families

The 1997 Adoption and Safe Families Act approved by Congress amended Title IV (B) to add components for time-limited family reunification services along with adoption promotion and support provisions. The amendment increased funding and also changed the name from Family Preservation and Support to Promoting Safe and Stable Families.

The Early Learning Division Provides \$8,600 a year in Title IV-B(2) funds to each of the nine federally recognized Tribes.

Tribes use Title IV-B(2) funds to serve the needs of their communities by investing in services, systems change, community development and capacity building that targets child maltreatment, adult substance abuse or poverty. Tribes also use these funds for transportation to alleviate barriers to accessing services, improving family management and life skills.

Healthy Families Oregon

Healthy Families Oregon, a program overseen, is a voluntary home visitation and family support program offering screening and outreach services to all first-time families during the prenatal period and/or at the time of birth. High risk families are offered intensive home visiting services. The state and local advisory boards are comprised of diverse community members.

The state's Healthy Families Oregon Advisory Committee and some local advisory committees include a tribal member.

In the summer of 2013 the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz selected the Healthy Families America model to implement their Maternal Infant Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) Tribal Grant home visiting program, thereby joining the Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) accredited statewide multi-site system of Healthy Families America sites.

The program manager for Siletz joined the statewide HFO coordinator for program manager training and attended the annual program manager meeting in September to formalize the relationship. Since then further training and technical support has been shared with the emerging HFO site via in person, phone and email communications. A formal intergovernmental agreement between the two is forthcoming wherein MIECHV tribal funds for services rendered by the Siletz program for technical assistance and training will be exchanged annually. The newly emerging Siletz site will be a full participant in the HFO statewide evaluation and follow all policies and procedures for the multi-site system. Special culturally specific curriculum, Family Spirit, will be utilized by the site to tailor the services appropriately.

In addition to this formal partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, Health Families Oregon programs across the state serve tribal children in partnership with county health departments.

Head Start

Head Start is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children ages birth through five from low-income families. Currently, five Tribes run federally funded and monitored Head Start Programs:

- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation
- Coquille Indian Tribe

None of Oregon's Tribes currently access state Oregon Pre-Kindergarten funding for Head Start programs.

Child Care and Development Fund and the Quality Rating Improvement System

The Child Care and Development Fund is a federal funding source for child care subsidies for low income working families and for improving child care quality. In 2013, Oregon submitted its CCDF state plan to the federal government. In the plan, the Office of Child Care indicated that it is working to strengthen tribal input. In the plan, the Office of Child Care also states that all recognized Tribes in Oregon may access the market rate information for the ERDC program, have access to input on the CCDF state plan and are updated on the CCDF state plan and subsidy through federal Region X coordinated calls.

The federal government makes CCDF funds available directly to federally recognized tribes. In Oregon, the following tribes access CCDF funds:

- Burns Paiute Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
- Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- Coquille Indian Tribe
- Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
- Klamath Tribes

In addition to the administration and oversight of the CCDF, which expands child care access to low income families, the Office of Child Care is working to improve the quality of early learning settings through a rating system known as the Child Care Quality and Improvement System (QRIS). Oregon's QRIS is a program that raises the quality and consistency of child care and early learning programs across the state. The QRIS recognizes, rewards and builds on what early learning and developmental programs are already doing well, looking at quality improvements across five areas:

- Learning and development
- Health and safety
- Personnel qualifications
- Family partnerships
- Administration and business practices

As the Office of Child Care prepares for a 2014 roll out of the QRIS, the Division is working to ensure each Tribe has information on the system and the opportunity to access training and information on the program should they choose to participate.

Early Learning Hubs

In 2013, House Bill 2013 directed the Early Learning Council to create up to 16 Early Learning Hubs charged with coordinating early learning services at the local level across the state.

Early Learning Hubs have five core responsibilities:

- Finding the children who need help the most.
- Working with families to identify specific needs.
- Linking families with service providers who can best address their needs.
- Accounting for outcomes collectively and cost effectively.
- Working across traditional program boundaries to achieve collective community accountability.

Early Learning Hubs are statutorily required to work across health, human services, K-12 education, early education and business. Early Learning Hubs are also required to work closely with local governments, tribes and parents/families.

The Early Learning Council is selecting Early Learning Hubs through a competitive request for application. The first round of applications opened in August and closed in October. The Early Learning Council has chosen to award six contracts from the first round of applications:

- Early Learning Hub Inc. (Marion County)
- South Central Oregon Early Learning Hub (Douglas and Lake counties)
- Oregon Frontier Services Hub (Harney and Grant counties)
- Yamhill Early Learning Hub (Yamhill County)
- Early Learning Multnomah (Multnomah County)
- Lane Early Learning Hub (Lane County)

Two of these Early Learning Hubs have formed formal affiliations with a Tribe. The South Central Oregon Early Learning Hub has formally affiliated with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe and Oregon Frontier Services Hub is in the process of formal affiliation with the Burns Paiute Tribe. Both Early Learning Hubs have enrolled tribal members represented on their governing body.

The Early Learning Division is committed to continuing to strengthen its collaboration with Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, through both the Oregon Department of Education's Indian Education Specialist and through proactive and consistent participation in the Government to Government Education Cluster Meetings. Over the course of the next year, the Division and the Council will continue to work to coordinate with each of Oregon's Tribes to improve the lives of Native American children and their families.

Respectfully submitted,

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