

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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# **Governor Kitzhaber Visits Quality-Rated Preschool to Highlight Statewide Efforts to Improve Early Learning Programs**

*(Eugene, OR)* — Governor Kitzhaber today gathered with Representatives Val Hoyle and Nancy Nathanson to visit a Eugene early learning provider certified by the Oregon Early Learning Division's rating system for qualified early learning and child care facilities. Friendship House Preschool is one of 39 sites statewide that has received a star rating from the Quality Rating and Improvement System based on its offerings to help prepare young Oregonians for kindergarten.

"Children across Oregon have amazing potential. Our job as adults is to meet them where they are and give them opportunities to be successful in school and in life," said Governor Kitzhaber. "Early learning programs are key to meeting our education goals. By supporting programs that offer quality early learning environments for all students, and by helping providers improve their services and programs, we are following through on our commitment to our youngest citizens."

The Quality Rating and Improvement System is designed to raise the quality and consistency of child care and early learning programs across the state. It will also parents a reliable tool for reviewing child care and early education options. Programs are evaluated in five main areas, including learning and development and health and safety, that influence a child's growth, health, and well-being.

Oregon's Early Learning Director Jada Rupley said child care providers are an important part of redesigning the state's early learning system. "Many are working with regional Early Learning Hubs to provide quality settings and engaging programs that can help improve outcomes," Rupley said. "We want to learn about what's working while providing tools that ensure a solid foundation for lifelong learning in school and beyond."

The Quality Rating and Improvement System rolled out in eight counties in 2013 and expanded statewide in March 2014. Since then, 39 early learning programs have received star ratings, and more than 540 facilities have committed to improving their quality. Nearly 20,000 Oregon children are enrolled in programs participating in providing high

quality care and education. Efforts to expand the program will provide all children and families, including at-risk and low-income communities, increased access to high quality early learning environments that establish a pathway for school success.

Funding for the QRIS came in part from a federal Race to the Top grant.

Providers interested in learning more about the program should visit:

<http://www.wou.edu/tri/QRIS/>.

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