

BUILDING A NEW MODEL FOR EDUCATION

Over the last several decades, the growing body of research on early childhood has shown us repeatedly that children begin learning the moment they are born. When they start kindergarten, children with fewer resources and advantages are already significantly behind the developmental curve. This gap has a long reach, affecting graduation rates, future earnings and health outcomes.

The good news is there are proven methods to help course correct and put these disadvantaged children on a path to success in school and life. But these interventions must be made early — before children reach kindergarten. And while many school districts and policymakers are interested in pursuing these practices, the path to implementation is not always clear.

The Children's Institute started the Early Works initiative to demonstrate how aligning early education and development programs with the elementary grades can ensure school readiness and future success. We plan to make the results of this project available to inform practice and policy decisions at all levels, especially here in Oregon. Together with our partners at the David Douglas School District, the Children's Institute began this initiative in 2010 at Earl Boyles Elementary School in Southeast Portland.

Third-graders who live in poverty and read below grade level are six times more likely than their peers to fail to graduate from high school.

— "Double Jeopardy: How Poverty and Third Grade Reading Skills Influence High-School Graduation," commissioned by the Annie E. Casey Foundation

THE VISION

With this initiative, our goals are to help children arrive at kindergarten ready for success and prepare them to meet critical benchmarks by third grade. The school will act as the critical hub for this project and, along with community partners, will provide a network of resources, information, services, and educational opportunities. Our aim is to engage families and children in this network beginning when a child is born and to make this experience part of a robust elementary education. Ultimately, our objective is to provide a path for children toward achieving academic success, developing resiliency, and becoming lifelong learners and productive citizens.

POLICY OBJECTIVES

Knowledge gained through this demonstration will be applicable to other districts, communities, and policymakers. We are interested in how best to: close the achievement gap and prepare children for kindergarten; build shared governance across systems; track, manage and share information about children and programs in order to spur continuous quality improvement; blend and braid funding and accurately capture the cost of providing quality early educational opportunities; and integrate professional development for teachers and providers across the birth-to-third-grade spectrum.

THE ROADMAP

Our goals for this project include:

- *Providing universally available services for families and children starting at birth. Examples include parent-child education classes, health screenings, preschool, and parent support groups.*
- *Providing these services at the elementary school.*
- *Integrating and aligning these quality early educational programs with the elementary grades.*
- *Evaluating and documenting the process to inform others.*

WHY EARL BOYLES?

The children attending Earl Boyles face a host of risk factors related to the achievement gap, including poverty, language barriers and a lack of high-quality early educational experiences. As a result, test scores through fifth grade lag behind state standards.

Despite these challenges, the leadership at the school shows a desire to improve the odds for the children at Earl Boyles. In a recent community survey, parents and teachers made clear their wish for more opportunities for group-based early childhood programs. The administration both at Earl Boyles and at the district level shows great strength and resourcefulness. A number of support programs have already been implemented at the school. This combination of need, motivation and commitment makes Earl Boyles an ideal home for the initiative.



Join the Conversation

See more pictures and read about the Early Works initiative — including the Early Works blog and the most recent status reports — at early-works.org.

An Initiative of the Children's Institute

The Children's Institute promotes wise investments and effective action in early childhood. Our work is anchored in a commitment to closing the achievement gap early with cost-effective public and private investments in early learning.

Learn more at childinst.org.





Early Works Expands from
Portland to Yoncalla



*The site of the initiative, Yoncalla
Elementary School, spans grades
kindergarten through eight.*

THE EARLY WORKS INITIATIVE AT YONCALLA

Over the last several decades, the growing body of research on early childhood has shown that children begin learning the moment they are born. When they start kindergarten, children with fewer resources and advantages are already significantly behind the developmental curve. This gap has a long reach, affecting graduation rates, future earnings and health outcomes.

Fortunately, there are proven methods to help course correct so that all children have a path to success in school and life. But these interventions must be made early – before children reach kindergarten.

The importance of early learning is especially relevant in school districts such as Yoncalla, where families may face a host of risk factors including high unemployment and poverty rates, as well as a shortage of livable-wage jobs and health care. Test scores show that 80 percent of the district's kindergartners score below or well below entry level benchmarks, and only 41 percent of the district's graduates pursue secondary education. While there are some existing early learning programs, many have narrow eligibility requirements and limited reach. It is easy for children and families to fall through the cracks. Many do.

Possible Program Features Include:

- *Parenting classes*
- *Summer literacy programs*
- *Infant, toddler and/or preschool classes*
- *Pre and postpartum education for new parents*
- *Resources and information for child care providers and parents*
- *On-site health services*
- *Professional development for school staff*

THE EVOLUTION OF EARLY WORKS

The Roseburg-based Ford Family Foundation and Yoncalla Elementary School recently entered into a partnership with the Oregon nonprofit the Children's Institute on an early learning initiative called Early Works. As part of this initiative, the Children's Institute has already established one site in a school in Southeast Portland; the Yoncalla project will be the first rural site. The goal is to establish Yoncalla Elementary School as a hub and catalyst in the community, a place where services are centralized and localized.

It will also be a place to align and integrate early childhood education with the other elementary grades in order to ensure that more children arrive ready for kindergarten and prepared to meet academic benchmarks by third grade. Ultimately, the objective is to provide a path for children to achieve academic success, develop resiliency, and become productive citizens.

PROGRESS SO FAR

This implementation of the Early Works initiative at Yoncalla is still in the early stages but already has support and enthusiasm from several key players in the community including Douglas County Educational Service District Superintendent George Murdock, Yoncalla Elementary and Middle School Principal Jerry Fauci and several members of the Yoncalla School Board. The Ford Family Foundation Early Childhood Development Program Officer Christy Cox is serving as a member of the leadership team along with other staff from Yoncalla Elementary School. A number of other individuals and institutions have also expressed interest in becoming community partners.

The Yoncalla site will benefit from its sister Early Works site at Earl Boyles Elementary in Southeast Portland, presently in its second year of operation. So far, this first site includes features such as a preschool classroom, a summer learning program, professional development for the school's staff and a home visiting component. Comprehensive kindergarten readiness and community needs assessments have already been completed.

While these two sites have many shared objectives, the addition of Yoncalla offers an opportunity to understand the unique needs of a rural community in Oregon. At Yoncalla Elementary, for example — where there are roughly 200 students in grades kindergarten through eight — addressing the needs of every single incoming kindergarten student is a real and measurable goal.

As part of the Early Works initiative, these two demonstration sites are created in part to be learning laboratories, examples to help other policy makers, educators and districts pursuing similar reform efforts. To that end, the Early Works team is engaged in an ongoing, significant effort to document the project, and to make available the lessons learned and wisdom gained throughout the process.



Join the Conversation

Learn more about the initiative — including the Early Works blog and the most recent status reports — at early-works.org.

An Initiative of the Children's Institute and The Ford Family Foundation

Promoting wise investments and effective action in early childhood to prepare children for success in school and life.

Learn more at childinst.org and tfff.org.


THE Ford Family
FOUNDATION

Children's
Institute





Ready for School

Powered by the Children's Institute

FACT SHEET

We've Made It Our Business — to Give Oregon's Kids a Better Start.

We're improving the lives of Oregon's children and building a stronger economy with wise public investments in high-quality early learning programs. Make it your business, too!

2013 Ready for School Agenda

Ready for School will continue to advocate for wise investments in high-quality early learning. We believe the full benefit of early investments will be realized only when our early learning and K-12 systems are connected.

- * Ready for School is asking the legislature to fund a \$10 million competitive Early Learning Strategic Grants fund. This seed fund would support the schools and districts leading the way toward an aligned and integrated learning continuum.
- * Ready for School is also supporting the governor's recommended budget for increased investments in early learning. Forty-eight million dollars (\$48 million) in new funding for early childhood is a significant and wise investment.
- * We also stand by the consolidation of early childhood programs in an Early Learning Division within the Department of Education. This is a major step forward and should strengthen governance of Oregon's early learning system.

Early Investments are Wise Investments

Only 66 percent of Oregon's high school seniors graduate in four years.

Research has shown repeatedly that the most cost-effective way to improve graduation rates is to stop this achievement gap before it starts and reach children at an early age—well before they attend kindergarten.

Better prepared kids means a more effective classroom environment for both teachers and students. Early investments in education deliver a return for the public by creating a more productive workforce and reducing social spending.

About Ready for School

Ready for School is a group of business and community leaders and former elected officials from around the state who contribute their time and expertise to ensure all children in Oregon arrive at school ready for success.

We believe that a sound foundational investment in early learning must be an essential part of Oregon's effort to close the achievement gap and reach the 40-40-20 vision, where 40 percent of Oregon graduates receive a four-year degree, 40 percent a two-year degree, and 20 percent a high school diploma.

We are committed to ensuring that Oregon is wise in its investments and holds itself accountable for achieving this goal.

A Track Record of Success

Ready for School is well-established as a leader in advocating for investment in early learning and supporting change to make our early learning system effective and accountable.

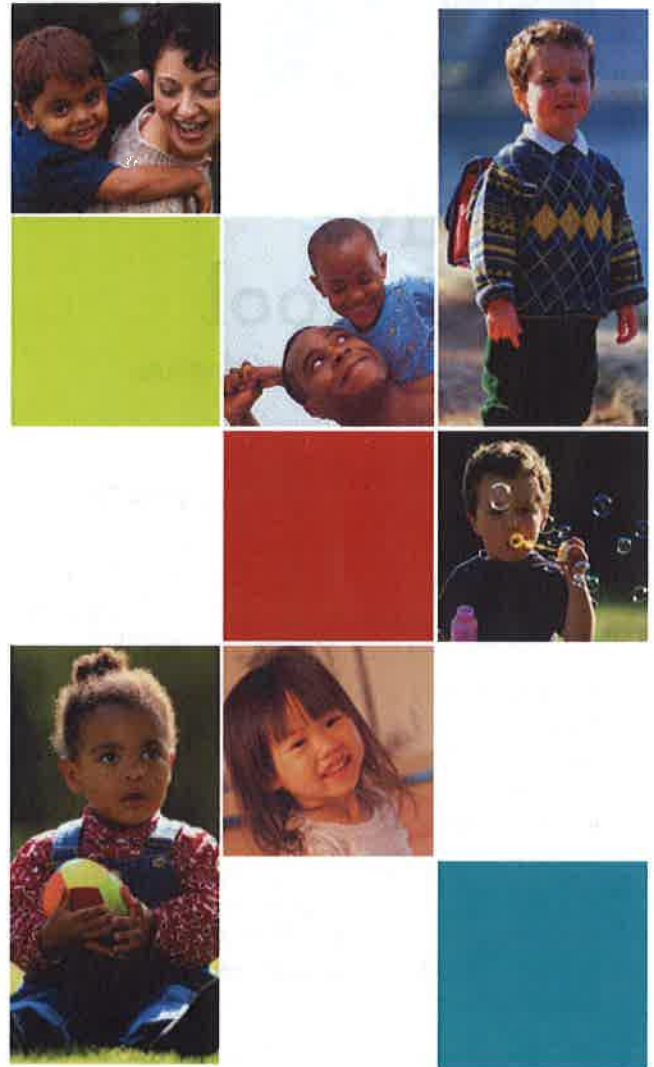
Key accomplishments include:

- * In 2007, Ready for School helped secure an additional \$39 million for Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten—a change that resulted in 3,000 additional children enrolling in Head Start each year.
- * In 2010, Ready for School successfully advocated for a first-time state investment of \$1 million in Early Head Start.
- * Ready for School fought hard for SB 909 in 2011 and HB 4165 in 2012, legislation that has initiated the reform of the early learning system in Oregon.

STATEWIDE LEADERS PANEL

- Isaac Regenstreif, Chair** – IHR Consulting, LLC
- Lynn Lundquist, Vice Chair** – Business and Government Leader
- Victor Atiyeh** – Former Governor, State of Oregon
- Julia Brim-Edwards** – Nike
- Rich Brown** – Bank of America
- Duncan Campbell** – The Campbell Group
- Theresa Davis** – Comcast Cable
- Gun Denhart** – Business and Civic Leader
- Carol Dillin** – Portland General Electric
- Pat Egan** – PacifiCorp
- Lori Flexer** – Ferguson Wellman Capital Management
- Don Frisbee** – Business and Civic Leader
- Ray Guenther** – Business and Civic Leader
- Pastor W.G. Hardy** – Highland United Church of Christ
- Lyn Hennion** – Umpqua Investments, Inc.
- Teresa Hogue** – Cascade Center for Community Governance
- Al Jubitz** – Business and Civic Leader
- Ray Jubitz** – Jubitz Family Foundation
- Gregg Kantor** – NW Natural
- Irving Levin** – Genesis Financial Solutions
- Pat McCormick** – AM:PM PR
- Barbara Roberts** – Former Governor, State of Oregon
- Linda Shelk** – Civic Leader
- John Sweet** – Sause Brothers Ocean Towing Company
- John Tapogna** – ECONorthwest
- Chris Tebben** – Grantmakers for Education
- Chip Terhune** – Schnitzer Steel
- Bill Thorndike** – Medford Fabrication
- Ken Thrasher** – Compli
- Jim Torrey** – Business and Civic Leader
- Kerry Tymchuk** – Oregon Historical Society
- Susan Walsh** – The Campbell Foundation
- Donald Washburn** – Business and Civic Leader
- Janet Webster** – Hatfield Science Center
- Gary Withers** – Concordia University
- Dick Withnell** – Withnell Motor Company
- Julie Young** – Civic Leader

- Elise Brown** – Campaign Manager
- Swati Adarkar** – President & CEO, Children's Institute



Ready for School is a statewide campaign to improve the lives of Oregon's children and build a stronger economy with wise 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 life. The campaign is informed by a growing body of social, scientific and economic research compiled and presented by the Children's Institute.



MAKE IT YOUR BUSINESS

503.219.9034 • www.ready-for-school.org