



Yamhill County Care Organization
Your Local Health Partner

February 23, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

The Yamhill Early Learning Hub wholeheartedly supports the 3-3 literacy initiative coming before the legislature this session. A primary goal for our Hub is that all children in Yamhill County will be ready for kindergarten, and will continue to be successful in school by third grade. In Yamhill County, we have identified children experiencing poverty and special education needs, as well as children whose home language is not English, as those who are most at-risk, and those we have purposefully targeted for our efforts. Research tells us that success will include our children's ability to read at grade-level by third grade. The 3-3 literacy initiative proposes a multi-tiered approach that includes research-based instruction and assessment as well as intensive family and community engagement, and we believe that the initiative will support the critical work that our Hub has begun in Yamhill County.

Through a variety of grants and the beginnings of community awareness, we have been able to increase family engagement in children's learning through projects with community partners including Head Start, our local Relief Nursery, doctor's offices, school districts, child care programs, public libraries, faith-based organizations, and county public health. We have ensured that all of the opportunities to engage the families have a focus on literacy. Some of these opportunities have included:

- Reach Out and Read: a program that trains doctors in providing literacy education and promotion to families of young children as a regular component of well child and other medical exams. The project includes distribution of free, appropriate books for children, and the reminder to parents that reading daily with their children is critical for successful development.
- Read and Feed: a program that provides free, appropriate children's books and opportunities for story times at locations where free meals are served, including the soup kitchens across our county.
- Summer Library: funds to support the staffing of school libraries to remain open one day a week in conjunction with the USDA summer foods program.
- Professional Development: training for child care and other early learning providers on the importance of intentional teaching in the area of literacy to ensure children are prepared for kindergarten and beyond, and that providers understand the Common Core education expectations for children through the third grade.

While we do not yet have data on children's outcomes related to these efforts, we know that we have strongly influenced practices and availability of evidence-based, coordinated literacy opportunities for young children and families in our community. What we have been able to achieve in this short time has been supported by temporary funding through grants and partnerships, which we feel are the beginning opportunities to make a difference in children's success.

The 3-3 literacy initiative will be a support to the work that we have begun, and will provide opportunities for strengthening and expanding this work to meet our goal that all children in Yamhill County are ready for kindergarten and life.

Thank you for your support of children, families, community, and education,

Jennifer Richter
Coordinator – Yamhill Early Learning Hub
Yamhill Community Care Organization