



Ready for School
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**Children's
Institute**

2015 Strategies: Advancing birth-to-3rd-grade success

Our children's first eight years in life are critical. In the 2015 Legislative session, we will advocate for these actions that strengthen the development of at-risk children in the early years:

INVEST IN EVIDENCE-BASED HOME VISITING

\$10 million to expand birth-to-3 home visiting services

Expand Oregon's investment in home visiting to ensure more at-risk infants and toddlers and their parents receive evidence-based home visiting services. Opportunity gaps can be detected before the preschool years. Effective home visiting supports positive parenting, improves health outcomes, increases school readiness, and can help prevent achievement gaps before they start.

INVEST IN HIGH-QUALITY PRESCHOOL

\$30 million to expand access to high-quality preschool

Build on Oregon Pre-K/Head Start to serve more low-income preschoolers and build toward a cohesive state preschool program. Allow high-quality programs to receive state funding for low-income students. Under this new preschool investment, schools, child care providers, community-based preschools and Head Start programs would all be eligible. Oregon Pre-K/Head Start only reaches half of eligible children. The state has nearly 32,000 low-income 3- and 4-year-olds who don't have access to high-quality preschool. Oregon's investment hasn't kept pace with the growing number of low-income children. Disadvantaged kids need preschool access to be prepared for kindergarten. Oregon recently lost its bid for \$15 million in federal money in part because it doesn't have a shared definition of quality preschool or a developed plan to expand preschool to reach all low-income children. We also support legislation that paves the way to create a shared definition of high-quality preschool in Oregon.

ENSURE EARLY LEARNING IS SUSTAINED THROUGH THIRD GRADE

\$9 million to expand Kindergarten Partnership & Innovation Fund

Early learning investments must be effectively connected to the early grades to ensure third-grade success. The Early Learning Council this year awarded \$4 million to 16 applicants (a one-year fund). It received 40 applications requesting more than \$10 million. This fund gives communities the opportunity on a competitive basis to create critical linkages between schools, early care and education and health providers, and parents. Cross-sector alignment and integration must be incented and supported at the local level to see meaningful system change.

ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENCE

Oregon needs to maximize the effectiveness of all of its early learning investments, including full-day kindergarten. Oregon has one of the highest chronic absence rates in the nation (generally defined as a student missing 10% or more of the school year). Included in our recommendations are to establish a system of public reporting around chronic absence beginning with kindergarten; provide guidance to districts in tracking and monitoring student attendance; and incorporate attendance data and goals into existing initiatives.

To read the full 2015 Strategies policy brief, go to childinst.org.

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