



March 14, 2017

Clackamas County Board of Commissioners
Policy Position
HB 5516: Relating to funding for Department of Education

The Clackamas region was designated as a regional Early Learning Hub in April 2015. The new Early Learning Hub system has played a significant role in changing how early childhood services are provided in Clackamas County. There is a clear and sharper focus on addressing the holistic needs of at-risk children from prenatal through age 6 and their families. In addition, the Hub has facilitated new partnerships that are committed to aligning services and supporting each other's work to ensure that children and families are healthy and stable and that young children are ready to succeed in school.

Parents, representatives of business, culturally specific organizations, early childhood providers, health care, CCOs, human and social services, and K-12 school districts have worked together to change the way we target and improve outcomes for Clackamas County's 20,000 underserved children, which include children of color, children from low-income families, children with disabilities, English language learners, and children from homeless, migrant, immigrant and refugee families. These children are less likely to receive services and supports and more likely to struggle in school as a result.

Clackamas County Early Learning Hub urges the committee to maintain current service levels, and if at all possible consider the Governor's Recommended Budget proposal to invest an additional \$105 million of State General Fund in early learning programs. These programs include Child Care Resource and Referral, Early Learning Division, Family Stability, Focused Child Care Networks, Great Start, Healthy Families, Hub Coordination, Kindergarten Partnership and Innovation, Preschool Promise and School Readiness.

Please contact Chris Lyons at clyons@clackamas.us for more information.

Examples of the current work that is being conducted through the Clackamas County Early Learning Hub includes:

Family Resource Coordinator Services for At Risk Families which provides referrals and/or direct connections to early childhood programs, medical providers, child care, housing, food, etc.

Kindergarten Partnerships and Innovation Initiatives which includes the following activities: Innovative Engagement, Support and Connections for Isolated Families and Child Care Providers –Designed to engage stressed and isolated families in preparing their children for kindergarten and supporting the child’s well-being and family stability. A Parent Outreach Specialist works to engage identify, connect and engage isolated families while conducting family engagement activities and referring them to evidenced-based, culturally appropriate parenting education opportunities.

Supporting Early Engagement and Development of STEM (SEEDS) for Communities of Oregon City and Gladstone -Designed to create authentic and meaningful connections between the early childhood education community, K-3 classrooms, and families with young children, and community members to foster early science technology, engineering and math learning experiences. Families are seen as having a vital role in their child’s education, therefore a primary focus of the project is to engage families in family learning events and parent education opportunities.

Early Childhood/Elementary School PreventNet programs have been established in Sandy (Sandy) and Lot Whitcomb Grade Schools (North Clackamas) to provide kindergarten transition support to families bridging the family support services provided within early childhood (i.e. Ready, Set, Go, Jump Start, etc.) with kindergarten transition. Also provided evidenced based parenting education classes to provide a holistic approach to working with families.

Early Literacy Outreach which includes a Train the Trainer session on “Every Child Ready to Read curriculum with 23 community partner agencies participating (Home Visiting Programs, Public Health and all 10 county-wide libraries; an online “Professional Learning Community” where participants can share resources and provide communication support. Each partnering agency agreed to provide 5 or more parent/adult trainings to meet the goal of reaching 2,500-4,000 families in Clackamas County to improve early literacy for young children and support kindergarten readiness.

Children of Incarcerated Parents project is a component of a comprehensive, multi-agency approach to addressing the most high-risk families in Clackamas County intended to build strong parenting skills, prevent child abuse and neglect and increase academic success. The primary target population would be children with justice involved parents (current/formerly) and justice involved parents identified through Corrections, PreventNet programs, Juvenile Department, Local Schools, Homeless Liaisons, Clackamas Public Health & Behavioral Health, and the State Department of Human Services. The geographic area served under this grant includes children/youth/families that live in Clackamas County. In addition, this project would provide referral services and transportation assistance and other basic incentives for continued participation.

Program Components include: Community Parenting Inside Out Curriculum

Community Parenting Inside Out Curriculum is the community version that consists of 24, 2 hour sessions and is appropriate for parents who have custody of their children or who are seeking visitation.

Mentor Inside Out is a comprehensive program that gives children of justice involved parents support to stay in school and to become healthy, successful adults. The program works with the whole family. It includes

individual mentoring, group activities, referral for additional health/behavioral health services and when appropriate, transportation for youth to jail/prison for visits with parents.

The Nurturing Parenting Programs are a family-centered trauma-informed initiative designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices. The long term goals are to prevent recidivism in families receiving social services, lower the rate of multi-parent teenage pregnancies, reduce the rate of juvenile delinquency and alcohol abuse, and stop the intergenerational cycle of child abuse by teaching positive parenting behaviors.

The Nurturing Programs target all families at risk for abuse and neglect with children birth to 18 years. The programs have been adapted for special populations, including Hmong families, Military families, Hispanic families, African-American families, Teen Parents, Foster and Adoptive Families, Families in Alcohol Treatment and Recovery, Parents with Special Learning Needs, and Families with Children with Health Challenges.

Preschool Promise Program is to both increase access to quality preschool and to enhance quality in existing early education programs for preschool aged children in Oregon.

Children must be members of families whose incomes, at the time of enrollment, are at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Programs maintain a clear focus on equity and address factors that contribute to achievement gaps that often exist between students who are economically disadvantaged, students learning English as a second language, and students who are African American, Hispanic or Native American and their peers. Programs identify strategies for reaching children with specific risk factors, and/or children who are not currently enrolled in formal Pre-K or child care programs, including those participating in license exempt and relative care.

Healthy Families of Clackamas County

Too many children are born into circumstances where parents are alone with no support, financially unable to provide basic necessities, and too stressed to understand what their baby needs. Healthy Families is a child abuse prevention program that offers weekly home visits to multi-stressed parents with children ages 0 to 3 years old.

Home Visitors provide families with a variety of information and assistance:

- The relationship between parent and child is essential to the child's development, so Home Visitors discuss the interactions and attachment between a parent and their baby. Explaining that how they talk to their baby and how he or she responds are all indicators of the strength of their relationship.
- Home Visitors also provide information on child development, basic infant care, ways to soothe a crying baby, who to turn to for support, connecting families with local resources, celebrating milestones and completing developmental screenings with each child.
- Families are also assisted with basic necessities such as clothing, books, diapers, formula, developmentally appropriate toys, car seats, and home safety supplies.

Many of the families' served live in poverty, are single parents, and/or teen parents that struggle with many stressors while they care for their new baby. Many of these parents were themselves raised in abusive homes, and they participate in the program because they want to make sure they do not continue the cycle of abuse with their own children.