



# Preschool Promise Accountability Report

## Executive Summary

Submitted by the Early Learning Division | March 31, 2023

# Executive Summary

Preschool Promise launched its largest and first statewide expansion at the start of the pandemic, resulting in significant under-enrollment of the program. This report addresses the strategies the Early Learning Division – soon to be the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) – has taken and will be taking to address enrollment, ensure accountability for funds allocated to Preschool Promise programs, and supports offered to programs to meet the quality standards necessary to deliver results for children, families and Oregonians.

## Program History

Preschool Promise was established in 2015 by HB 3380 to increase the availability of high quality, publicly funded preschool programming across the state. In order to achieve this, Preschool Promise grantees are given funding that includes the fixed costs of operation – including rent, staff salaries, and program equipment - based on the number of children the program anticipates serving. Oregon families who are living at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, foster families, and families in specified rural communities are eligible for services.

Preschool Promise services were first delivered across nine Early Learning Hub regions in September 2016, with over 1,300 children receiving services in the 2017-2017 biennium. The first statewide expansion of this program was funded in 2019 as part of the Student Success Act. Programming was slated to begin in 2020 but was significantly impacted by the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the Early Learning Division – along with other state and federal agencies – focused on maintaining the limited availability of high quality preschool services in the state regardless of low enrollment levels during the pandemic.

## Program Administration and Accountability

Throughout the administration of this program, the Early Learning Division has continued to evolve to meet community needs. This includes shifting to granting directly to Preschool Promise providers, allowing small, woman-owned businesses and nonprofits the opportunity to grant directly with the State and providing greater oversight for program administration; developing interim data collection methods; and contracting with Early Learning Hubs to coordinate the enrollment of families across Preschool Promise programs in their regions. As the Early Learning Division becomes the Department of Early Learning and Care, new systems and processes are being developed to continuously improve program administration and accountability. This will include a new Grants Management System, data system, a dedicated procurement team to assist with grant and contract administration, and a shift to two-year grant agreements to improve program stability and increase enrollment.

In addition to the anticipated infrastructure changes, the Governor’s Budget includes a recommendation to fund a Program Quality Assurance team for the Department of Early Learning and Care. This team would be responsible for on-site program monitoring, coordination of necessary technical assistance with local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, and appropriate fiscal monitoring as needed. The agency is well-positioned to take on continuous improvement measures by leveraging the [planned Secretary of State Audit](#), Governor Kotek’s agency expectations, as well as internal auditor and quality assurance positions included in the Governor’s Budget.