

Early Learning Council SB 909 Report

Executive Summary

Oregon's best opportunity for distinction and success in the global economy of the 21st century is creating a world-class education system that starts early and produces results.

Every year about 45,000 children are born in Oregon. Roughly 40% of these children are exposed to a well-recognized set of socio-economic, physical or relational risk factors that adversely impact their ability to develop the foundations of school success. These include poverty, unstable family backgrounds, substance abuse, criminal records and negative peer associations. Moreover, Oregon's history of delivering results for children of color¹ is particularly disappointing, as exhibited in the well-known "achievement gap,"

Section 5 of Senate Bill 909 created the Early Learning Council, and charged the Council with formulating recommendations for the Oregon Education Investment Board (OEIB) to merge, redesign or improve the coordination of early childhood services and align early childhood services with child-centered outcomes. The Council was also charged with establishing a plan that could be implemented by June 30, 2012.

The Early Learning Council adopted the foundational elements proposed by the Early Learning Design Team ("strawperson" report) and included elements of the recent Race to the Top Grant-Early Learning Challenge Grant Application in the creation of these recommendations. The Council also considered recommendations from the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, the Association of Oregon Counties, the Oregon Pediatric Association, the Oregon Head Start Association, and the Commission for Childcare in writing this report.

This report is organized in two sections: A) the process utilized to arrive at recommendations; and B) recommendations followed by implementation steps. The sections that address specific elements of SB 909 are highlighted throughout the document.

Summarized Recommendations:

- In 2012, place under the direction of the ELC for policy, planning, alignment and operational efficiencies toward a common outcome the following programs and services [*SB 909 5 (2b-f)*]. This is not a transfer of budget authority (excepting programs of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families); the ELC is not creating an agency or seeking agency status.

¹ Children or communities of color is a term intended to represent all racial and ethnic minorities

- Childcare Division (Employment Dept.)
 - Employment Related Daycare (Department of Human Services)
 - USDA Childcare Nutrition Program (Department of Education)
 - Oregon Head Start/OPK (Department of Education)
 - Home Visiting Programs (OCCF, Oregon Health Authority)
 - Programs of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families (see specific recommendation).
 - Other programs (i.e. WIC, EI/ECSE) should be studied further to determine system integration and remain on the ELC list of responsibilities for next phase (2013) system reshaping by the 2013 legislature
- The Early Learning Council should engage in a joint planning process with the State Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education to consider the unique complexities of these services and make recommendations to the OEIB and legislature related to these services.
 - Oregon statute should reflect compliance and alignment with the Federal Head Start Act. This includes re-competition for OPK in a manner that aligns with new federal processes and expectations for outcomes.
 - Eliminate the Oregon Commission on Children and Families [*SB 909 5 (2a)*] and transfer existing program, budget, and staff positions to the Early Learning Council.
 - Remove all statutory requirements currently imposed on Counties related to County Commissions on Children and Families, and remove requirements on state government related to the Commission system. (Nothing in this recommendation should be read as precluding local officials from appointing any advisory body that local officials see fit to appoint to meet their local needs).
 - Eliminate the Oregon Commission on Childcare from statute [*SB 909 5 (2e)*]
 - Designate the ELC as the Governor’s Appointees to the Children’s Trust Fund Board (by statute the Governor currently appoints 20% of the Board with no connection to state policy or investments).
 - The Early Learning Council integrates and aligns services and sets outcomes, standards, policies, and requirements consistent across all early childhood programs.
 - Organize the delivery of services through Accountability Hubs.
 - Organizations serving as “Accountability Hubs” may be service providers, newly created partnerships, or existing entities, provided they meet ELC statewide standards.
 - Accountability hubs should be formed through issuance of Request for Proposals (RFP) to serve children and begin using the family resource manager model.
 - Establish and maintain family resource manager function. Inventory the existing performance of Family Resource Manager functions across systems.
 - Change the name of Family Support Manager to Family Resource Manager
 - Streamline existing processes and assessments into a single, common screening tool.
 - Voluntary use of screening tool at universal access points and natural touch-points for families.
 - Develop accountability for screening in Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs) settings for their members.

- Incorporate training for early identification of risk into unified workforce development plan for all early childhood professionals.
- Adopt Head Start Child Development Early Learning Framework for ages 3-5 across systems.
- Adopt the Head Start Child Development Early Learning Framework as a requirement for all Head Start and Oregon Pre-K programs.
- Align to K-12 Common Core State Standards to support linkage of early childhood outcomes and learning with K-12 education.
- Revise Birth to Three Standards to align with Head Start Child Development Early Learning Framework.
- Implement the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System as described in Oregon's Race To The Top –Early Learning Challenge Grant Application.
- Pilot Kindergarten Readiness Assessment in 8-12 pilot districts in 2012; deploy statewide in 2013.

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