

Early Childhood Adopted Strategies, 2014- 2019

Goal for Program Area

Support children's early development and readiness for Kindergarten.

Introduction and Background

For the past two decades, a growing body of research confirms that children's first years of life are critical to their academic success and overall wellbeing in later years. Best practice interventions to support children's early development, including intensive home visiting, high quality preschool, and early childhood mental health consultation, are shown to strengthen children's development and to mitigate the risk of negative outcomes caused by adversity early in life.ⁱ

Local dataⁱⁱ indicate approximately 26,000 – 30,000 children birth to 5 years old in Multnomah County are at risk of entering school unprepared for kindergarten. Research-based risk factors include poverty and low level of education of mothers, and characteristics of race/ethnicity and primary language spoken in the home. Data reveal that child poverty rates in Multnomah County are higher for children of color. Recent County data also indicate that 75% of 3,000 births to women with less than a high school education were to women of color.ⁱⁱⁱ These data suggest children's need for early childhood services that support their early development.

In addition, **public input in this program area** indicated the following priorities^{iv}:

- Invest in high-quality, affordable preschool opportunities for children least likely to arrive at school ready for kindergarten.
- For younger children, focus investments on home visiting services that provide intensive relationships (e.g. such as Early Head Start).
- Support programs that intentionally develop parenting skills, such as parenting classes, and parent-child activities that strengthen parent-child relationships.
- Provide access to mental health consultants that specialize in helping parents and early childhood professionals learn skills and tools to guide and manage child behavior.
- Prioritize serving children at highest risk of not being ready for kindergarten: children in poverty, children of color, immigrant/refugee children and English Language Learners, children with disabilities. Focus investments in East Portland and North Portland.
- Invest in culturally responsive or culturally specific programs; seek out best practices that are culturally specific or that are adapting to become culturally specific or more culturally responsive.
- Make informed investments in the context of other major local/state initiatives; align outcomes and share Levy data with those efforts for continuous system improvement.
- Offer workforce development for early childhood professionals and program technical assistance, including strengthening supervision and use of trauma-informed care.

The Allocation Committee adopted the following strategies and priorities for the Early Childhood program area.

Strategy 1. Intensive Home-Visiting for children prenatal- 3 years old	
Investment Goal	Up to \$ 5,096,567 over 3 years (50% of funding in this program area)
Services	Intensive home-visiting services using best practice models that support children and their development by strengthening parent-child relationships and parenting skills
Eligible Population	Children prenatal to 3 years old at time of intake into services [children older than three may continue to be served in the proposed program if they were at least 3 years old at time of intake/enrollment into the proposed program], and their parents/guardians
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children from low-income families, children of color including immigrant/refugee children • Providing services in high poverty areas of Portland
Definitions	<p><u>Intensive</u>: Visits of at least one hour, provided weekly or twice-monthly, and offered to families for at least one year, preferably multiple years, for each child served^v</p> <p><u>Best Practice Models</u>: Parents As Teachers and Early Head Start home-based model, and other models with similar best practice features^{vi}</p> <p><u>Low-income</u>: Children in families with annual incomes at 185% or less of the Federal Poverty Level.</p>

Strategy 2. Preschool, Head Start, or structured preschool-like experiences	
Investment Goal	Up to \$ 3,567,597 over 3 years (35% of funding in this program area)
Services	Opportunities for children to attend high-quality preschool, including Head Start/ Oregon Pre-Kindergarten, or to attend structured, weekly “preschool group activities” devoted to children acquiring skills in early learning, early math, and healthy social behavior.
Eligible Population	Children age 3 to 5 years old at time of intake into services, and their parents/guardians
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children from low-income families, children of color including immigrant/refugee children, and children with disabilities • Providing services in high poverty areas of Portland.
Definitions	<p><u>High-Quality preschool</u>: Meets nationally or state-recognized best practice standards for early education, such as federal Head Start Quality Standards, Oregon Programs of Quality, a four-star or five-star rating on Oregon’s Tiered Quality Rating System, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, or any other documented best practice standards on high quality preschool.</p> <p><u>Preschool-like Experiences</u>: Weekly preschool group activities provided at least 2 hours per week for at least 6 months of the school year for each child served; serves the same group/s of children (8 – 10 children per group to 1 adult group leader/facilitator/teacher) for the duration of the service; and group activities focus on children’s early learning in reading, math and social skills.</p> <p><u>Low-income</u>: Children in families with annual incomes at 185% or less of the Federal Poverty Level.</p>

Strategy 3. Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation	
Investment Goal	Up to \$ 1,528,970 (15% of funding in this program area)
Services	Early childhood mental health consultation, including Positive Behavior Intervention Supports, for children in childcare, preschool/Head Start/Early Head Start, and home-visit settings.
Eligible Population	Children birth to 5 years old at time of intake into services, their parents/primary caregivers, and their early childhood teachers/home visitors
Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serving childcare settings (including Head Starts, preschools, and family childcare) where the majority of children served are low-income children, and/or children of color including immigrant/refugee children. Providing services in high poverty areas of Portland.
Definitions	<p><u>Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:</u> “Early childhood mental health consultation involves a professional consultant with mental health expertise working collaboratively with early care and education staff, programs and families to improve their ability to prevent, identify, and respond to mental health issues among children in their care. In contrast to direct therapeutic services, ECMHC offers an indirect approach to reducing problem behaviors in young children and, more broadly, promoting positive social and emotional development.”^{vii}</p> <p><u>Positive Behavior Intervention Supports:</u> “...An application of a tiered prevention framework for young children... a ‘teaching pyramid’ as a continuum of supports and services designed to build social competence and prevent challenging behaviors for young children.”^{viii}</p>

ⁱ See reports published at the Center for Developing Child at Harvard University, <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

ⁱⁱPortland’s Children: Overview of Key Local Data, portlandchildrenslevy.org.

ⁱⁱⁱ 2010-2011 Oregon Birth Certificates: Center for Health Statistics, Center for Public Health Practice, Public Health Division, Oregon Health Authority prepared by Multnomah County Health Department. (Prepared per request by PCL. Available upon request.)

^{iv} See full Community Input Report, portlandchildrenslevy.org.

^v Threshold based on recent research regarding effective home visiting services: US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, <http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/programs.aspx>; and Child Trends, What Works for Home Visiting Programs, 2010: <http://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2005/07/2010-17WWHomeVisit.pdf>

^{vi} Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness. US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, <http://homvee.acf.hhs.gov/programs.aspx>

^{vii} Georgetown University, Center for Child and Human Development. <http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/67637.html>

^{viii} http://www.pbis.org/community/early_childhood/default.aspx