

Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Impact Report 2024



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Division for
Early
Childhood

of the Council for Exceptional Children



Oregon Department of
Early Learning
and Care



State Advisory Council for
Special Education



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INCLUSION

Building Equitable Futures



Inclusive
Partners

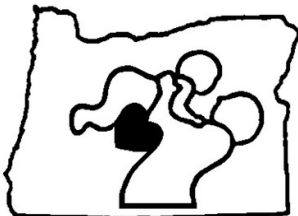
Oregon Department of
Early Learning and Care



Children's
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Oregon Center for Children and
Youth with Special Health Needs



State Interagency
Coordinating Council



Oregon State
University



OPK
Oregon Prenatal
to Kindergarten

Oregon Department of
Early Learning and Care

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Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children



FACT OREGON
Empowering families - Transforming disability

This report is dedicated to Hadiyah Miller, a leader, scholar, parent and friend. Hadiyah was a dedicated member and collaborator during initial instillation of the State Leadership Team and Implementation of the Indicators of High Quality Inclusion. Her active participation in meetings, trainings and feedback sessions with providers, local and national partners leaves an imprint on the Indicators of High Quality Inclusion that cannot be overstated.



Shared Vision: Inclusion is Centered in Belonging

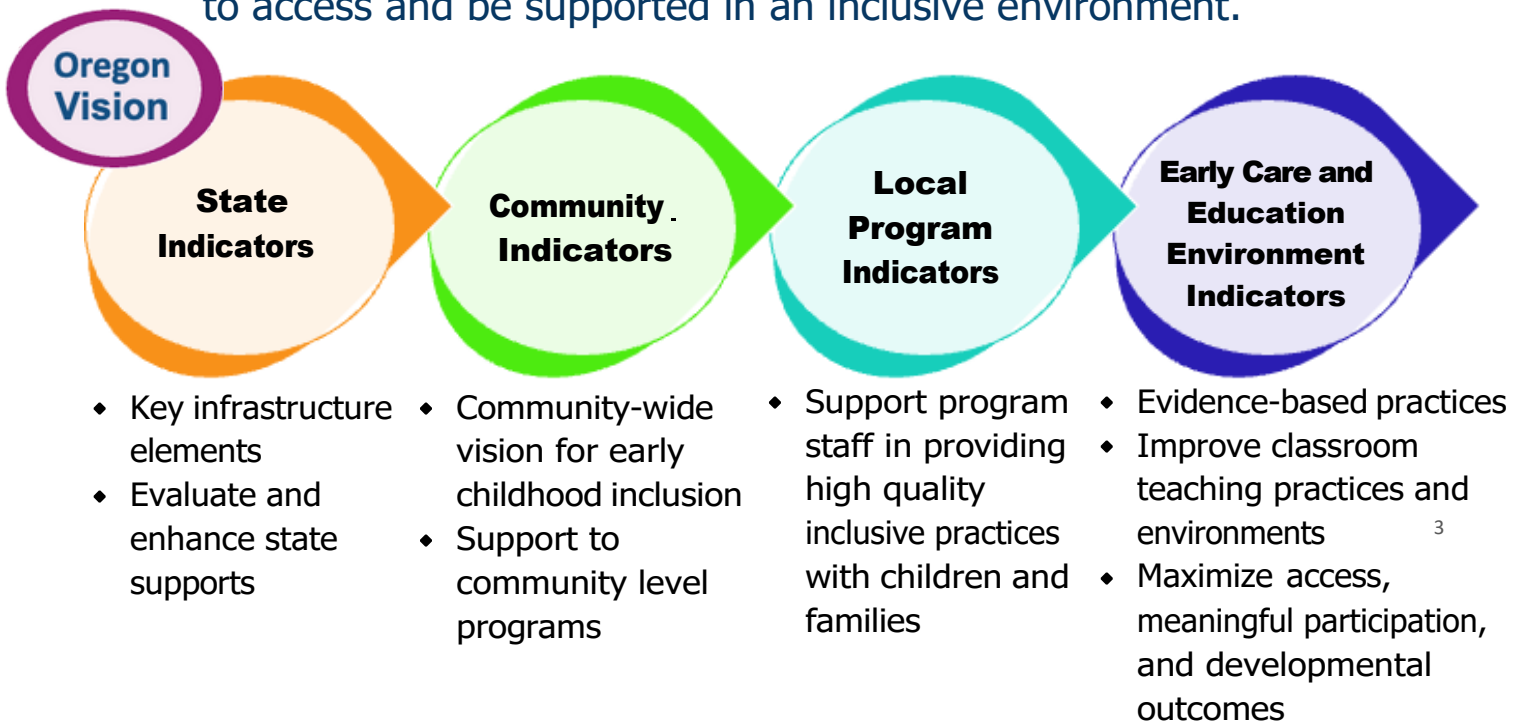
We believe:

- **Disability is to be appreciated** as a natural part of the human experience that makes our families and communities stronger.
- Families have the right to enter into relationships with early care and education providers **trusting their child will be welcomed, loved, and seen in all of their human dignity**, including their culture, race or dis/ability.
- All learning environments for young children and their families should be **inclusive, culturally responsive, and identity affirming**.
- **Every child should learn and thrive together** with their peers, friends, and neighbors. Children achieve their best self when nurtured by empowered families, providers, and communities.
- The Early Care and Education system is enhanced and strengthened through a **network of professionals, parents and community members**

Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Initiative

Mission:

Co-Create a statewide, collaborative system that allows every child to access and be supported in an inclusive environment.



Shared Goals and Commitments

1

Establish cross-agency implementation teams at the **state, local, and program** level to address the needs of young children experiencing disability.

2

Strengthen **partnerships with families** so their vision for their child is fully realized.

3

Increase access to services and support through **coordination of resources** at the state and regional level.

4

Enhance and expand support to families, early learning personnel and early care and education programs through cross-disciplinary training and technical assistance.

5

Develop and strengthen **regional networks** of implementation and practitioner coaches.

6

Develop and strengthen policies, procedures, funding, and other **system infrastructure** components needed to support intentional implementation.

Oregon's Equity Stance

Education equity is the equitable implementation of policy, practices, procedures, and legislation that translates into resource allocation, education rigor, and opportunities for historically and currently marginalized youth, students, and families including civil rights protected classes.

This means the restructuring and dismantling of systems and institutions that create the dichotomy of beneficiaries and the oppressed and marginalized.



Building State Capacity to Provide What Programs Need

Center

Center equity, culturally responsive and identity-affirming practices

Evaluate

Evaluate data to guide action and improvement

Prioritize

Prioritize family voice and choice

Provide

Provide supports that advance equitable outcomes

Implementing a Culturally Responsive and Anti-Racist Model

Addressing Implicit Bias & Racism

Coaches and Consultants actively and intentionally address implicit and explicit bias

Address intersectionality of race, gender, age, and ability



Training for coaches & consultants

Building authentic relationships by learning histories and current context of communities served

“ I learned a very important lesson in making sure the work always starts with me. ”

Inclusion Indicators Initiative

State Level, Program Level, and Early Care & Education Environment



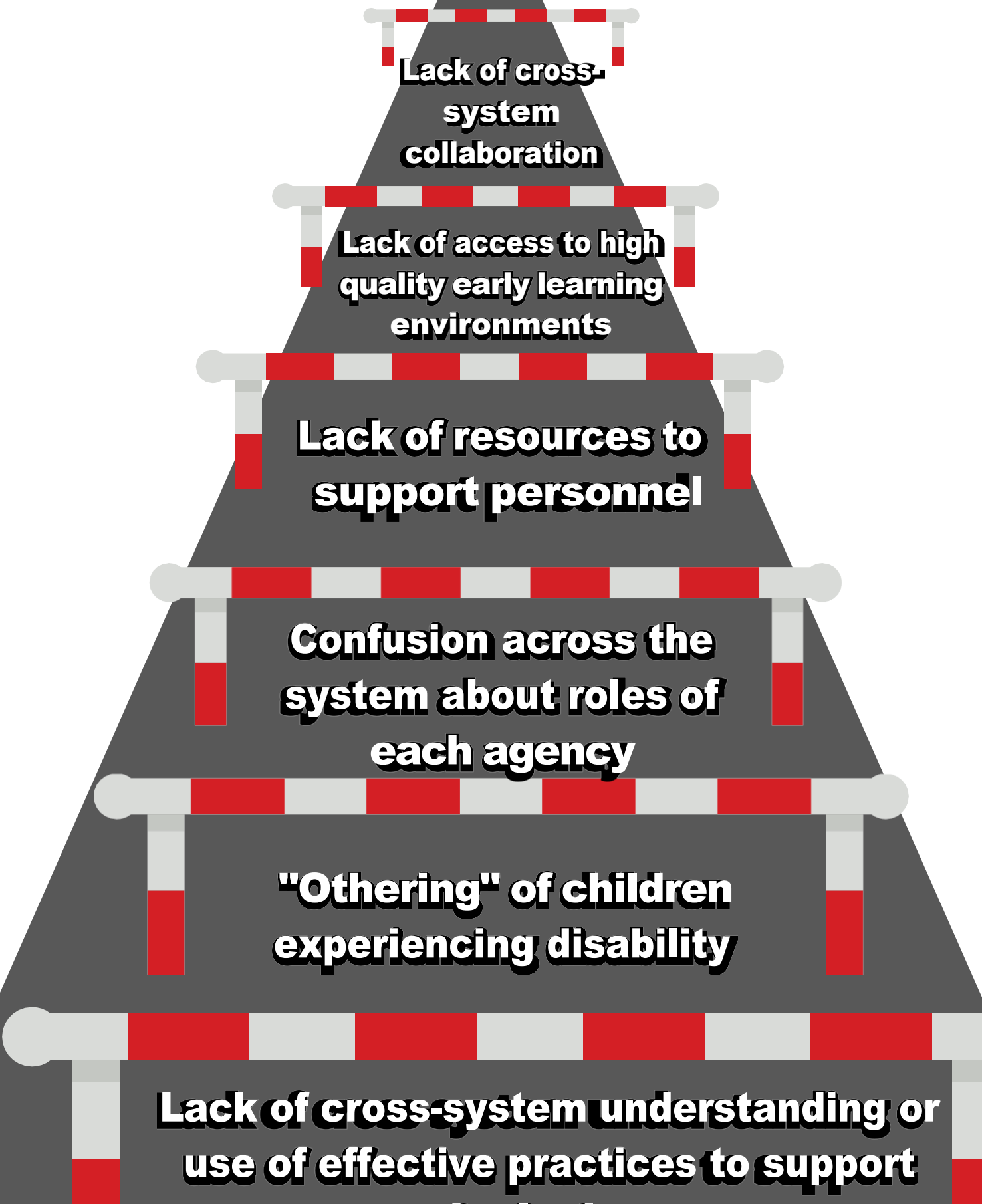
Webinar - Indicators of High Quality Inclusion: A Comprehensive Set of Tools

INDICATOR 7: COLLABORATIVE TEAMING

Personnel use communication and collaboration strategies with interdisciplinary team members (e.g., special educator, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist) and families to share information, review data, plan, and implement instructional supports and adaptations for individual children completely within the natural environment.

ECTA: Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center
 OT: Occupational Therapist
 SLP: Speech Language Pathologist

Barriers to Inclusion: The Root Causes



Lack of cross-system collaboration

Lack of access to high quality early learning environments

Lack of resources to support personnel

Confusion across the system about roles of each agency

"Othering" of children experiencing disability

Lack of cross-system understanding or use of effective practices to support inclusion

Ableism

Ableism is a form of systemic oppression that gives advantages to people without disabilities.

Overt Ableism

Violence

Hate Crimes

Ableist Slurs

Ableism suggests that some abilities are “normal” or “better” and ranks people’s worth based on their abilities.

Ableism results in barriers and discrimination that negatively impact students with disabilities.

Lack of captions Educational exclusion & segregation

Tokenism Police brutality “Crazy”

Inappropriate discipline Fear of disability people jokes

Intrusive questions “Everyone is a little autistic”

Ableism can manifest in overt or subtle ways, including:

- Refusing to provide accommodations
- Using ableist language like “lame” or “crazy”
- Segregating or marginalizing students
- Punishing students for disability-related behavior
- Limiting students’ equitable access to education

Subtle Ableism

Ableist curriculum

Low expectations

“You’re inspirational!”

Able savior complex

Equity in education cannot be addressed without addressing ableism.

Inclusion Benefits Children

...with Disabilities

- Positive gains across all areas of development
- Higher level social skills
- Improved peer relationships
- Gains in language and literacy skills
- Benefits for all children regardless of nature, type or severity of disability

...and without Disabilities

- Greater cognitive and language skills
- Higher-level empathy skills
- Advanced social skills and stronger peer relationships
- Achieve an awareness, respect, and understanding of diverse abilities
- Inclusive classrooms tend to be of higher quality in general, so all children benefit



Inclusion Benefits Educators & Systems

**Better able to assess
children's needs and
identify barriers**



**Using reflective questions
helps educators to think
about where their teaching
style comes from.**

**Access to professional
development**

**Access to early intervention
practitioners, special
education specialists,
therapists and other
colleagues who bring fresh
perspectives and innovative
teaching techniques**

Cost benefits



Impacts of Exclusion*



Desegregating preschool access is an important step in ensuring all students are engaged learners in kindergarten and prepared for success in all aspects of school.

Access

The number of young children with disabilities served in inclusive settings **remains unchanged since the passage of IDEA**

Fewer than half of young children ages 3-5 receive special education services in regular early childhood programs

Three-year-olds are the **least likely group** of young children to receive services in inclusive settings



Equity

Children with certain categories of disability have **less access to inclusive settings**

Children of color are less likely to receive a developmental screening or obtain early intervention services

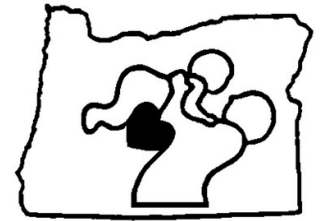
Children of color are overrepresented in special education (3-21) and **more likely to be placed in segregated settings**



Focus on Systems Change



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Early Learning System Initiative



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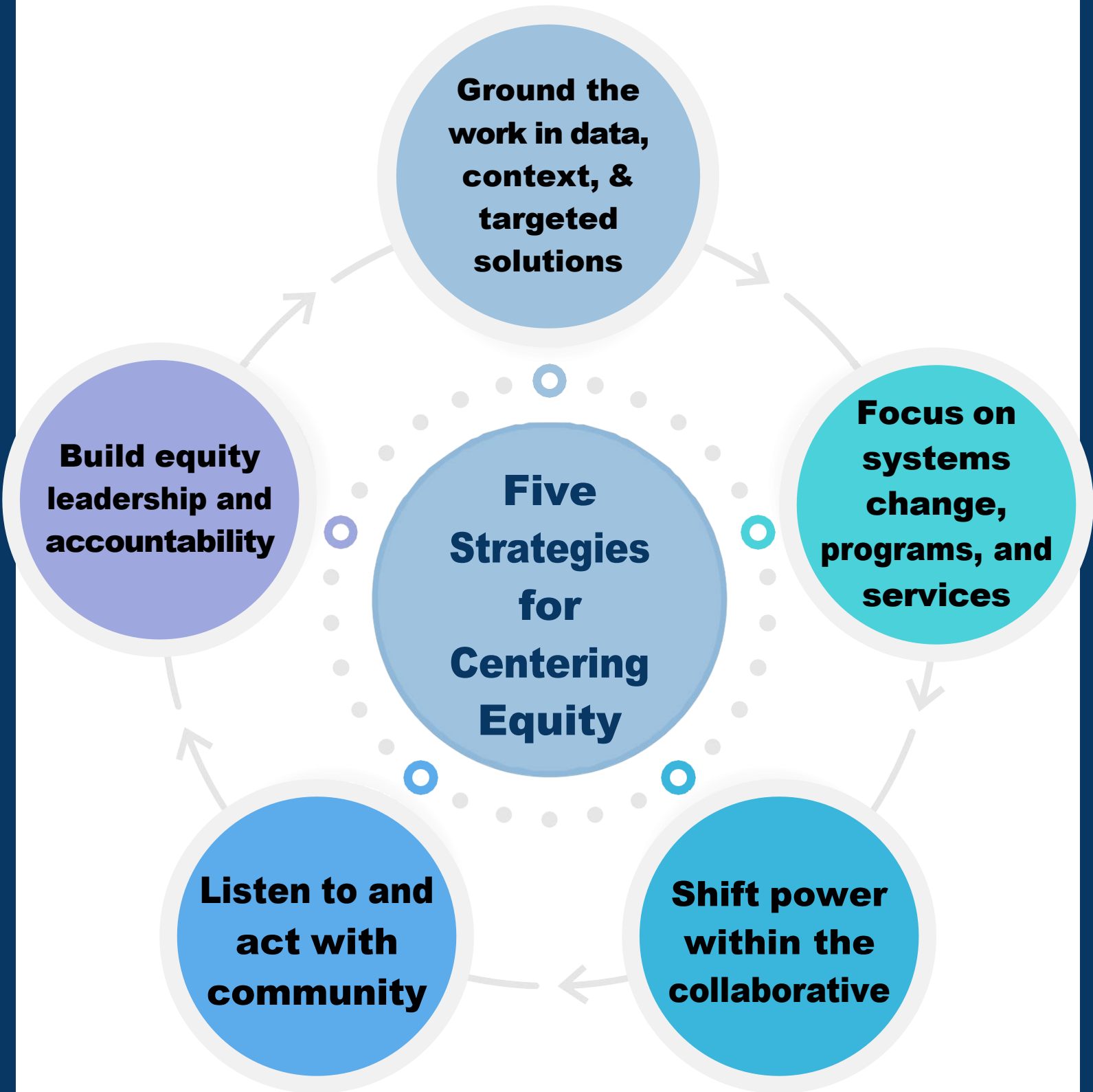
**Children's
Institute**

Raise Up Oregon

**Oregon's Early
Childhood Inclusion
State Leadership
Team**

**IDEA Services
Early Intervention/
Early Childhood
Special Education**

Centering Equity in Collective Impact



Supporting a Comprehensive Approach to Service Delivery

I know as we progress through it will all come together.

Transdisciplinary Service Delivery

Transdisciplinary service is defined as the **sharing of roles across disciplinary boundaries** so that communication, interaction, and cooperation are maximized among team members.

Transdisciplinary Service is:

Family Centered

Coordinated across disciplines

Designed to allow for an integrated approach

Recognized as the best practice for early intervention



Supporting Implementation

INCLUSION INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT TEAM

The goal is to contribute to expanding supports for an inclusive, culturally responsive, and identity-affirming early care and education workforce that can support families and community members who care for young children.

in partnership
with:



Oregon State
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Primary activities include:

- Developing a framework of support to implement the Pyramid Model Framework and the National Indicators of Inclusion in Oregon early care and education environments
- Using data to identify successes, gaps, & needs related to inclusive practices in Oregon
- Connecting with inclusion practitioners and communities in Oregon to best support the early care and education workforce, children, and families
- Supporting coaches in cohorts of Oregon Community Inclusion/Leadership Teams
- Engaging with system partners and leaders to increase inclusive opportunities for children across the state.

Our People



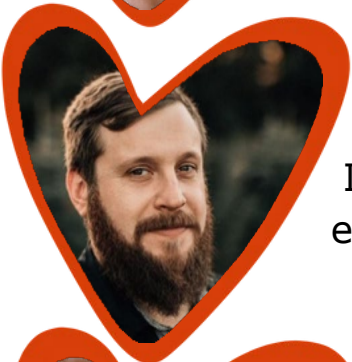
Dominic Paz, Implementation Manager
dominic.paz@oregonstate.edu

I want to build an early care system that welcomes all families. Contact me for Pyramid Model and inclusion professional learning and collaboration and the ELSI BILPOC Community of Practice.



Mackenzie Weintraub, Training Outreach Coordinator
mackenzie.weintraub@oregonstate.edu

I'm passionate about building communities where each young child is celebrated and supported. Contact me for Pyramid Model Trainings, community-wide implementation, and PIDS.



Chad Lahr, Training Outreach Coordinator
chad.lahr@oregonstate.edu

I believe in inclusive early childhood education and supporting educators. Contact me for Early Childhood Inclusion Indicator training and Community Inclusion Team support.



Tess Wood, Team Coordinator
tess.wood@oregonstate.edu

I aspire to be a bridge connecting children & families with what they need. Contact me for general questions, coordination, and collaboration.



Sindy Abzun, Training Outreach Coordinator
sindy.abzun@oregonstate.edu

I am inspired to provide support for educators, children, and families to reach their full potential and find their infinite value in society. Contact me for Early Childhood Inclusion Indicator training and Community Inclusion Team Support.

Drs. Bridget Hatfield and Megan McClelland serve as the principal investigators on this grant from Oregon Department of Education. Please reach out to them at bridget.hatfield@oregonstate.edu or megan.mcclelland@oregonstate.edu for additional questions related to the Inclusion Initiative. Visit <https://health.oregonstate.edu/elsi/oregon-inclusion-initiative> to learn more.

Coordinating with the Early Learning System Initiative



Early Learning System Initiative

The Early Learning System Initiative has four related objectives:

- **Relationship development**
- **Development of a mentor coaching framework**
- **Supportive training aligned with early educator competencies**
- **Data analysis and evaluation**



Underlying each objective, ELSI commits to centering anti-racism, equity and inclusion.

Leveraging Job-Embedded Professional Development

Practice-Based Coaching

Practice-based coaching is a cyclical process for **guiding practitioners' use of evidence-based practices** for promoting positive child outcomes.



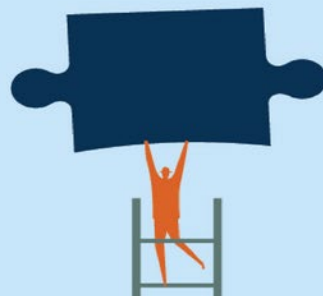
Practice-based coaching involves the following components:

- Collaborative partnerships
- Shared goals and action planning
- Focused observation
- Reflection and feedback

Coaching Teachers in Inclusive Practices

Hearing
about it in training

Implementing
it in daily practice



Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion State Leadership Team



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Who are we and what do we do?

The State Leadership Team (SLT) is an interagency group that is responsible for planning and supervising the initiative, including:

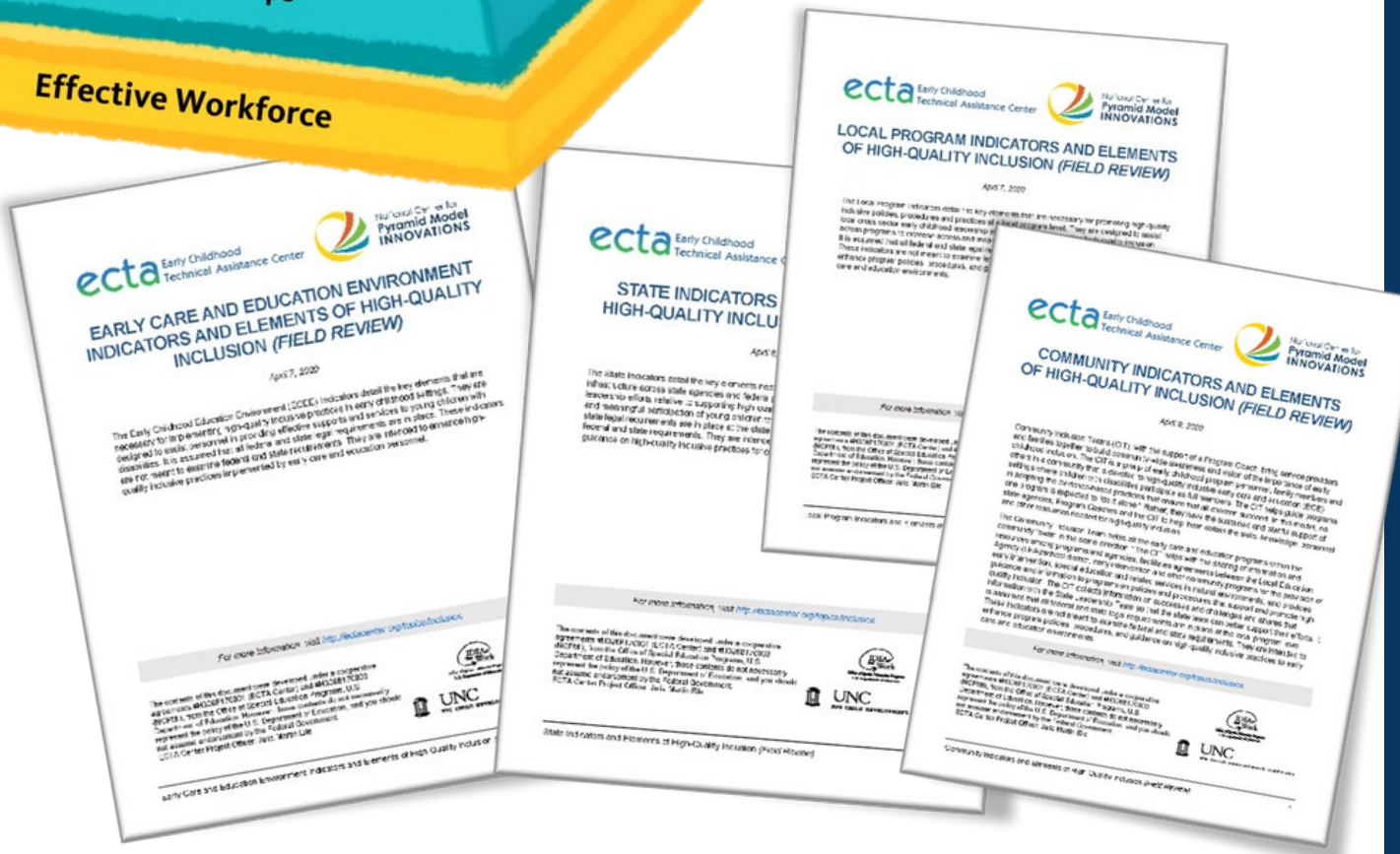
- 
- **Identifying funding supports**
 - **Advancing policy situations**
 - **Completing evaluation of initiative outcomes**
 - **Using data for decision making**
 - **Ensuring adequate training & coaching supports are available statewide**
 - **Supporting communities with implementation**
 - **Advancing public awareness on equitable and effective practices**
 - **Facilitating meaningful family engagement and partnership**

We use the State Leadership Team Benchmarks of Quality and the Early Childhood State Indicators of Inclusion to guide the initiative, assess progress, and plan future actions.

Innovations Supporting Inclusion and Advancing Positive Child Outcomes



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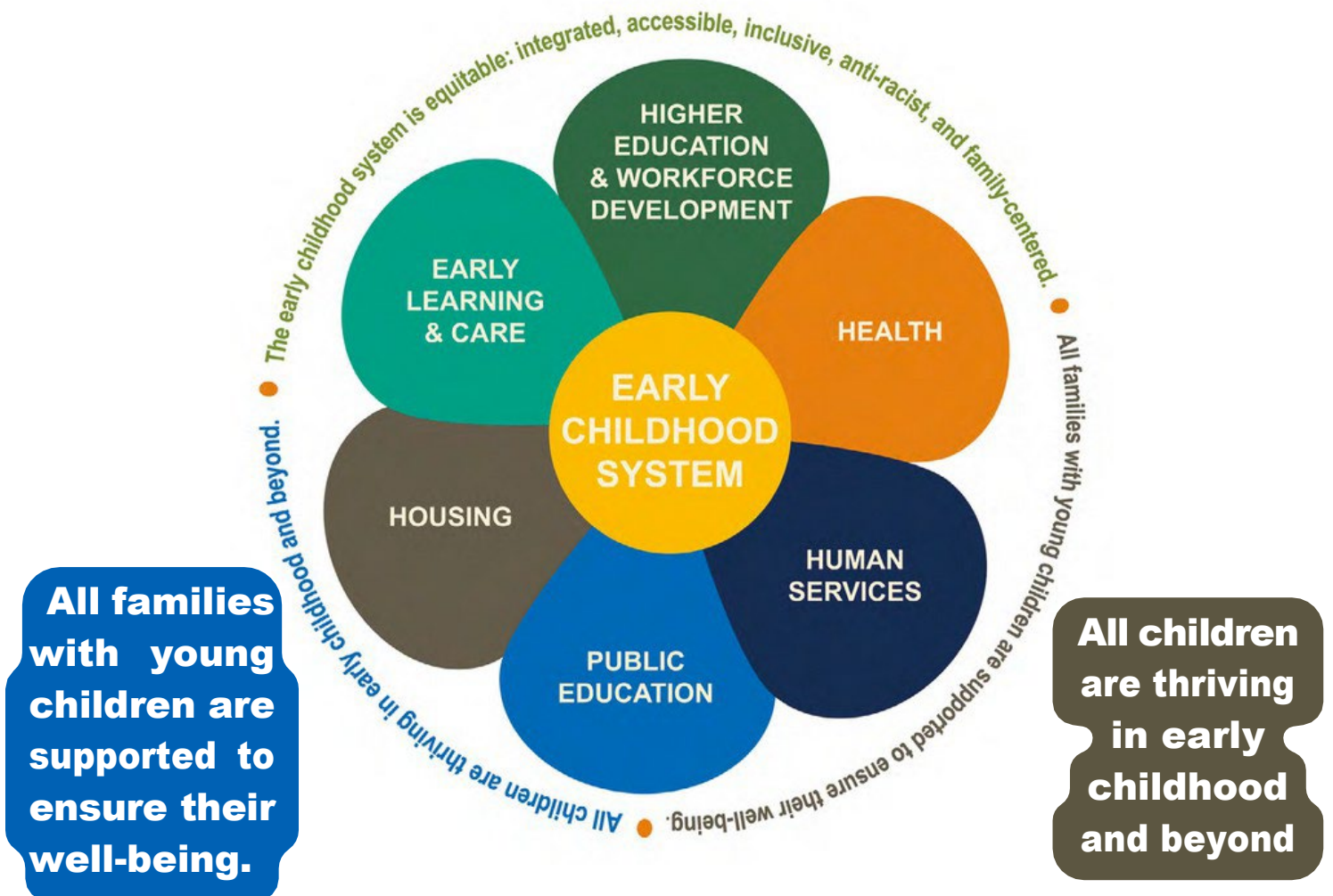
Elevate and Implement

Raise Up Oregon: A Statewide Early Childhood System Plan

Raise Up Oregon serves as Oregon's comprehensive state system plan for early childhood, prenatal to age five. The plan was created in partnership with six state agencies: ODE, DELC, ODHS, OHA, OHCS, and HECC.

Raise Up Oregon has three goals:

The early childhood system is equitable, integrated, accessible, inclusive, anti-racist, and family-centered.



All families with young children are supported to ensure their well-being.

All children are thriving in early childhood and beyond

Current Initiative Priorities

Establish a State Leadership Team: SLT Indicator 1

- Sustained Cross Agency State Leadership Team
- Unified Strategic Plan for Scale-up and Sustainability

Coordination of Cross-Sector Professional Development for Providers: SLT Indicator 9

- Investment in community level early learning professional development system (CCR&R)
- Training and support to regional trainers, coaches, and special education staff

Allocation of Resources to Support Personnel: SLT Indicator 8

- Shared investment in the Early Learning System Initiative (ELSI)
- Increased collaborative planning for PD that uses local community and program self-assessment data
- Advising state and local partners on fiscal investments in inclusive education.

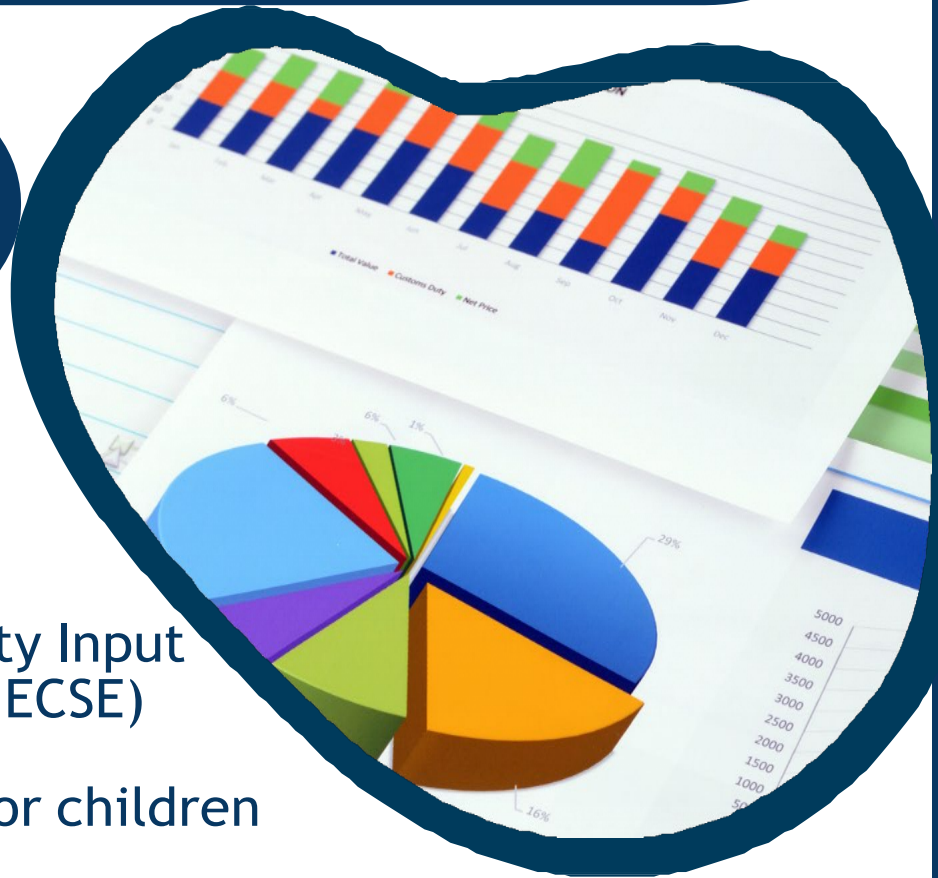
Public Awareness: SLT Indicator 12

- Branding and resources for shared use across agencies
- Website, newsletter, and materials to support unified messaging
- Use and inclusion of cross-system data to identify root cause barriers to inclusion

Examining Data for Informed Decision-Making

Data Gathered:

- PDG Strengths and Needs Assessments
- Implementation Data
- Family and Community Input Reports (PDG and EI/ECSE)
- IDEA Outcome Data for children ages Birth to 5



The Context:

- Early Learning System consists of systems within systems
- Specialists, providers, and training professionals serve the same population of families and children
- Families and providers bear the burden of navigating a complex system of supports



Agencies Represented in Oregon's State Leadership Team

Oregon Department of Education

- ✦ IDEA Part C and B619 (EI/ECSE)
- ✦ IDEA Part B ✦ PreK to 3rd Grade Coordination

Department of Early Learning and Care

- ✦ Publicly funded early learning programs (Head Start/Early Head Start, OPK, Preschool Promise, Relief Nursery)
- ✦ Early Childhood Suspension & Expulsion Prevention Program/IECMHC
 - ✦ Tribal Early Learning ✦ Professional Learning
 - ✦ Community Systems (Early Learning Hubs and CCR&R)
 - ✦ Office of Child Care ✦ Inclusive Partners

OCCYSHN, Oregon's Title V

- ✦ Public health agency for children and youth with special health care needs

Oregon State University

- ✦ A coaching capacity-building center at Oregon State University

FACT, Oregon's Parent Training and Information (PTI) Center

State Advisory Committee for Special Education (SACSE)

Oregon Division of Early Childhood (OrDEC)

State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children (ORAEYC)

Children's Institute

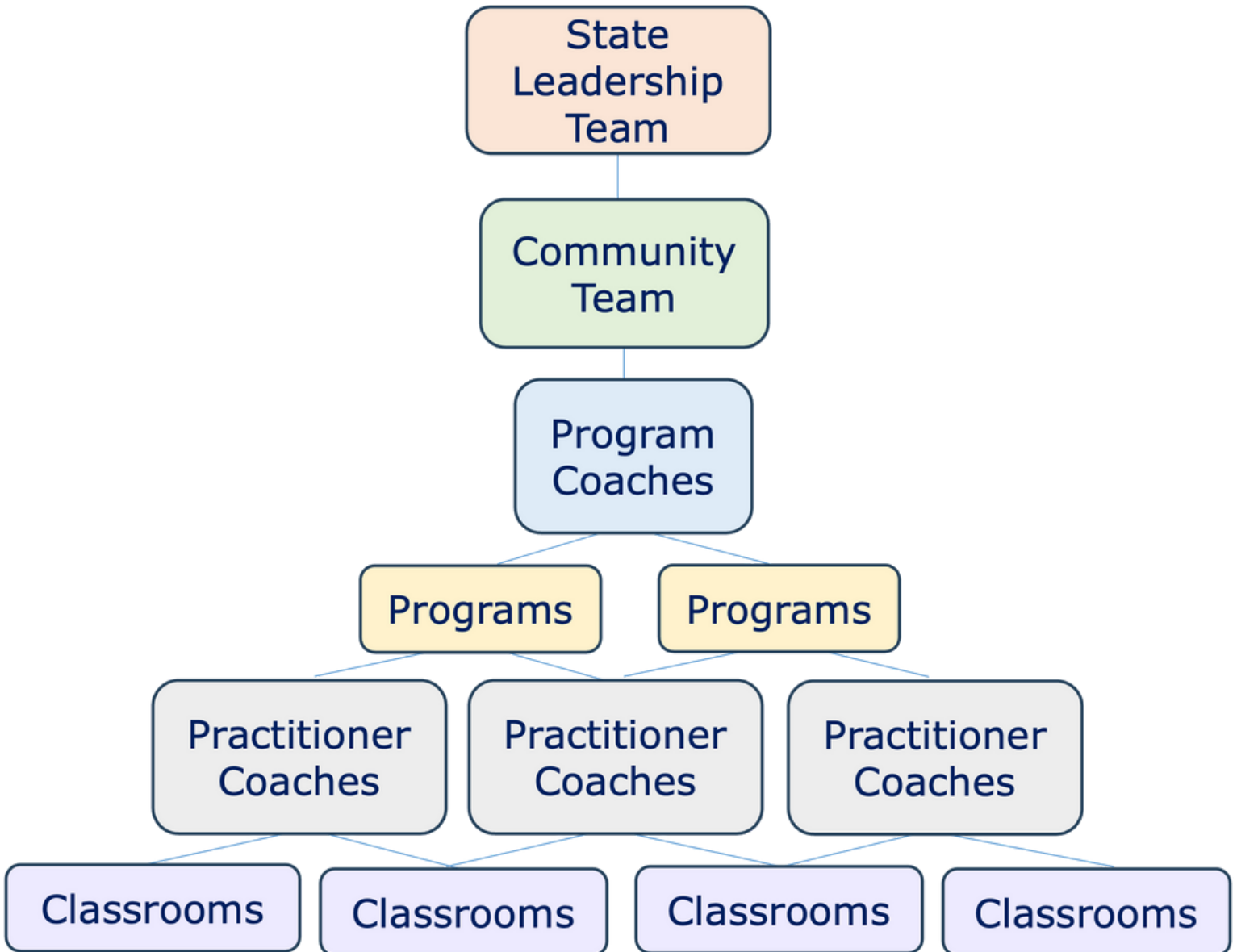
State-Wide Implementation Structure



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Current Investments in Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Initiative



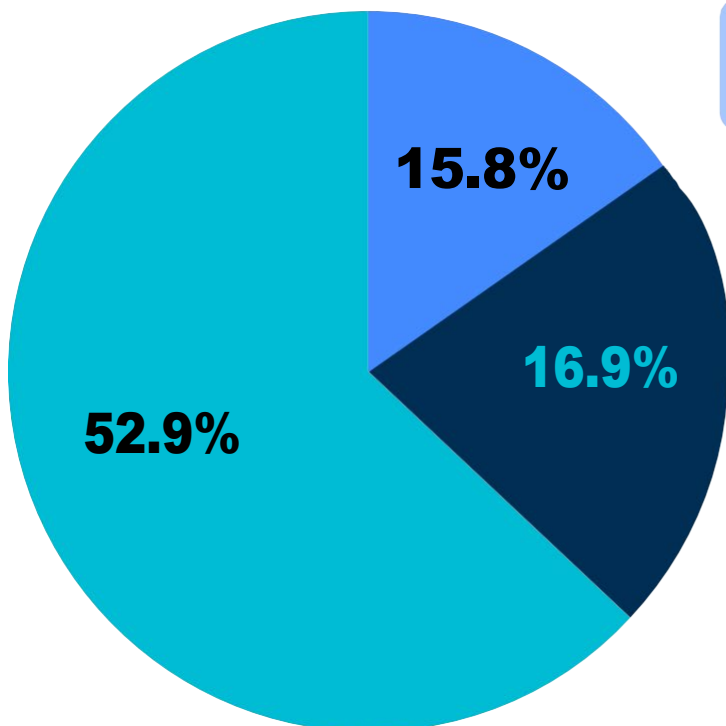
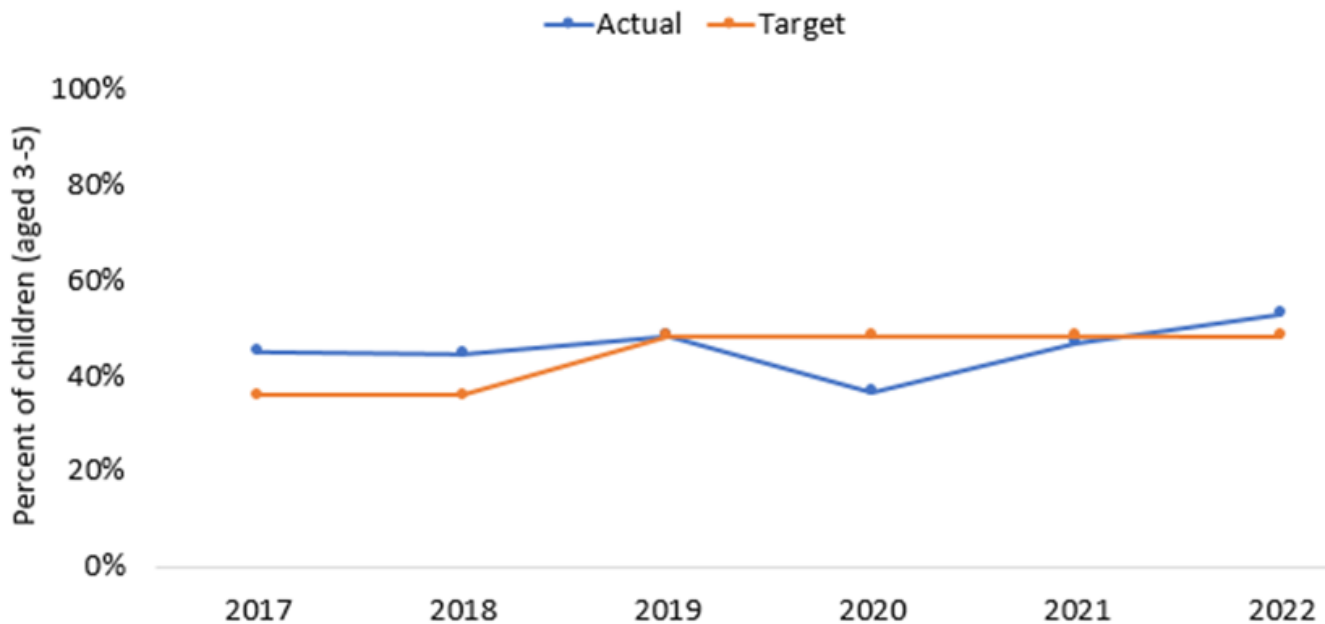
- **Minimum of \$20,000 set aside for implementation activities, events, and training opportunities**
- **\$4,000,000 ESSER Investment in the Early Learning Systems Initiative to build out infrastructure for sustainability and scale-up**
- **\$4,000,000 PDG/GEER Funds for Inclusion to support, policy initiatives, evaluation, data-based decision making, training, and coaching, community selection, and public awareness.**



- FTE for State Coordinator Roles
- Local Investments in FTE, Professional Development Supports, and Community Partnerships
- Inclusive Partners, Child Care Development Funds leveraged to ensure Regional Supports for Inclusion are accessible to all

Focused on Solutions that Lead to Positive Impact

Indicator B6A: Percent of children (aged 3-5) attending a regular early childhood program and receiving the majority of special education and related services in that program (Results)



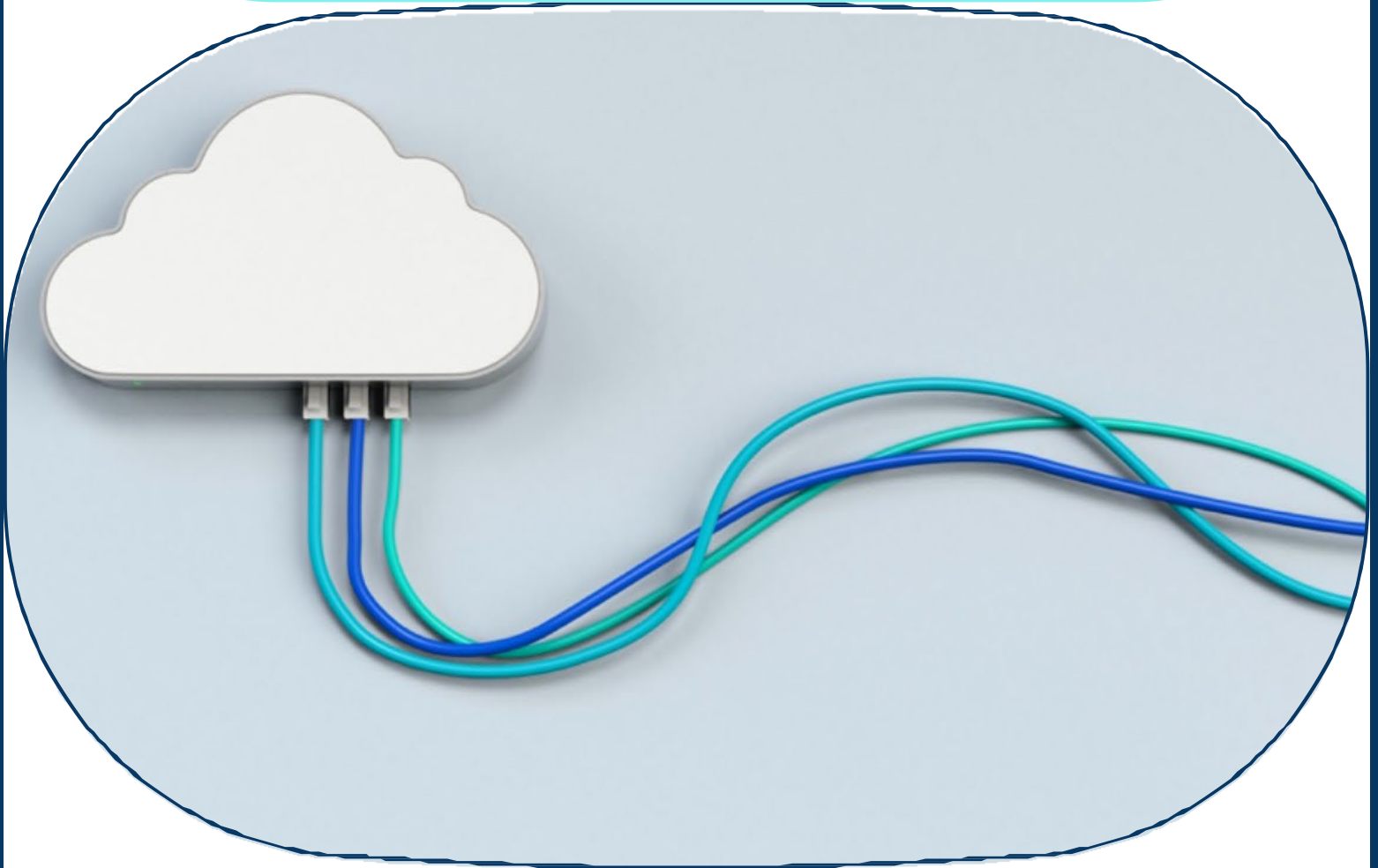
Home Target: less than or equal to 19.7%

Special Education Class Target: less than or equal to 23.0%

Regular Early Childhood Program Target: greater than or equal to 48.3%

OECl Online

- **Website: Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion**
- **Video: 2022 Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Leadership and Project Conference: Indicators of High Quality Inclusion- Community Based Inclusion**
- **ODE Key Messages-OECI Newsletter (search Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion)**
- **Insights from the Field: Implementing Pyramid Model Community-Wide**
- **Website: Oregon Inclusion Initiative Implementation Support Team**



Sequence of Scale-Up Events

State Leadership Team selects first set of Community Teams and assigns a Program Implementation Coach to each

- **First set of Community Leadership Teams select first cohort of programs**
- **Programs reach fidelity**
- **Community leadership teams scale to second cohort of programs, etc**

State Leadership Team selects second set of Community Teams and assigns a Program Implementation Coach to each

- **Second set of Community Leadership Teams select first cohort of programs**
- **Programs reach fidelity**
- **Community leadership teams scale to second cohort of programs, etc**

State Leadership Team selects third set of Community Teams and assigns a Program Implementation Coach to each

- **Third set of Community Leadership Teams select first cohort of programs**
- **Programs reach fidelity**
- **Community leadership teams scale to second cohort of programs, etc**

Valuing Community Inclusion

Moving Towards Equitable Education

Community-Wide Implementation: Purpose

- Support implementation and sustainability of equitable and effective practices
- Empower communities to make decisions based on their unique context
- Build awareness throughout the community
- Link high-quality inclusive programs to the public, including policy makers, student teachers, media, and institutions of higher education
- Collect and share community progress information annually
- Identify and support additional programs to implement evidence-based practices over time, scaling-up a sustainable system of equitable and effective practices

Community-Wide Implementation: Method



- Monthly meetings
- Norms
- Vision
- Thoughtful and intentional membership
- Meaningful data collection and use



Resources



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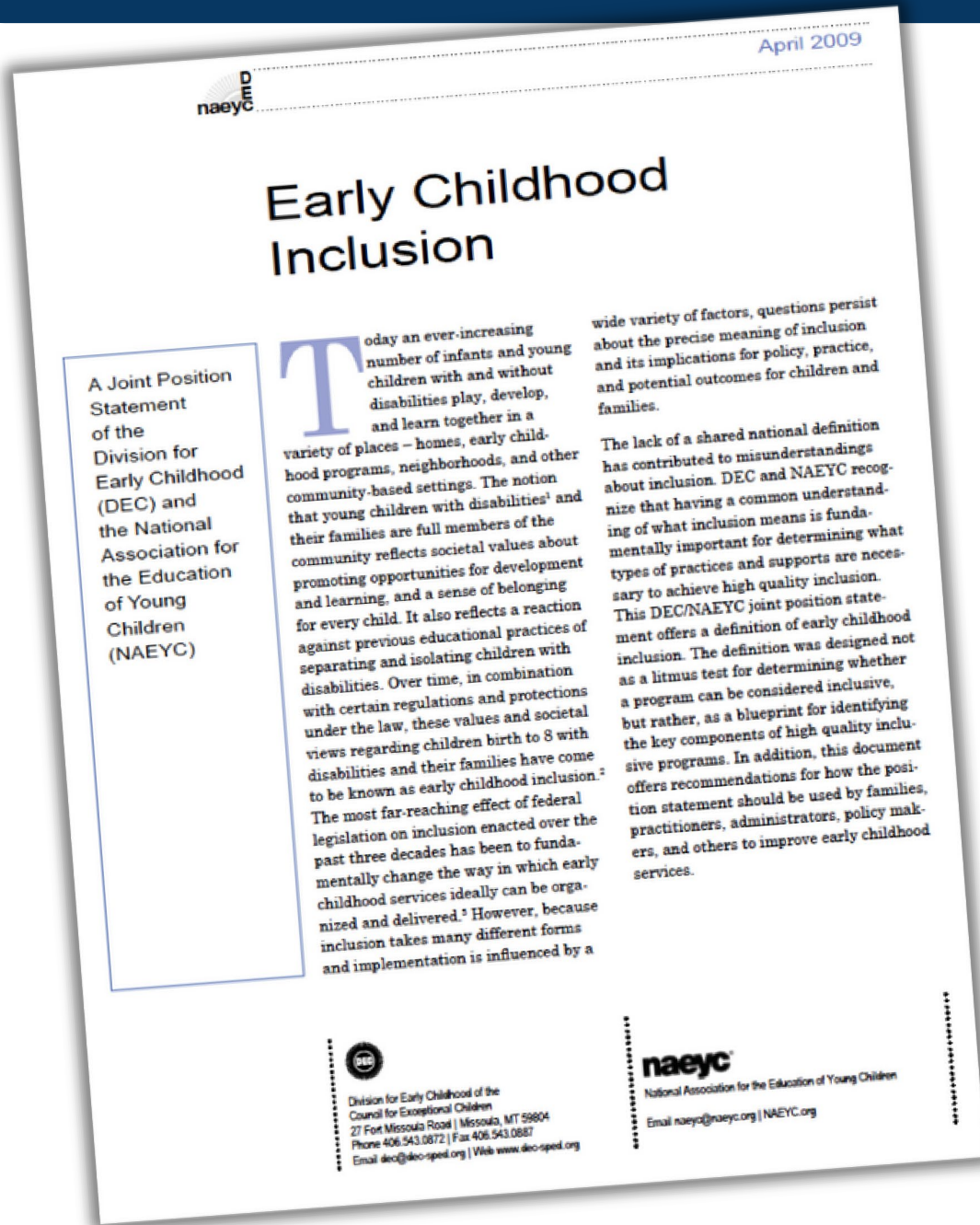
Fact Sheets on Preschool Inclusion

The research is clear.
Inclusion benefits everyone!



Resource retrieved from:
<https://ectacenter.org/topics/inclusion/research.asp>

NAEYC-DEC Joint Statement on Inclusion



Includes recommendations for using this statement to improve early childhood **access, participation, and support.**

Resource retrieved from: https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/ps_inclusion_dec_naeyc_ec.pdf

Policy Statements on Early Childhood Inclusion

"Inclusion in early childhood programs refers to including children with disabilities in early childhood programs, together with their peers without disabilities; holding high expectations and intentionally promoting participation in all learning and social activities, facilitated by individualized accommodations; and using evidence-based services and supports to foster their development (cognitive, language, communication, physical, behavioral, and social-emotional) , friendships with peers, and sense of belonging. **This applies to all young children with disabilities, from those with the mildest disabilities, to those with the most significant disabilities.**"



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION

POLICY STATEMENT ON
INCLUSION OF CHILDREN
WITH DISABILITIES IN
EARLY CHILDHOOD
PROGRAMS

[Policy Statement
on Inclusion of
Children with
Disabilities in
Early Childhood
Programs \(PDF\)
\(ed.gov\)](#)

"Dear Colleague" Letter from US Department of Education



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

January 9, 2017


Dear Colleague:

We are writing to reaffirm the position of the U.S. Department of Education (ED or Department) that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate supports to enable them to meet high expectations. Over the last few years, States and communities have made progress in expanding early learning opportunities for young children, with all but four States investing in free public preschool programs.¹ The Federal government, while aligning with the movement of States, has led several efforts to increase access to and the quality of early childhood programs, such as the Preschool Development Grants and expansion of Head Start. States have focused on improving the quality of early learning programs, including the development of early learning program standards and incorporating these into Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS).²

“ We are writing to reaffirm the position of the U.S. Department of Education (ED or Department) that all young children with disabilities should have access to inclusive high-quality early childhood programs where they are provided with individualized and appropriate supports to enable them to meet high expectations.”

[Dear Colleague Letter related to Preschool Least Restrictive Environments \(PDF\)](#)

Head Start Memorandum on Inclusion of Children with Disabilities



ACF Administration for Children and Families	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES	
	1. Log No. ACF-IM-HS-20-01	2. Issuance Date: 01/22/2020
	3. Originating Office: Office of Head Start	
	4. Key Word: Head Start; Children with Disabilities; Inclusion	

TO: All Head Start and Early Head Start Agencies and Delegate Agencies

SUBJECT: Inclusion of Children with Disabilities

ABSTRACT:
This Information Memorandum (IM) highlights requirements in the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) related to the inclusion of children with disabilities and delays. It includes a list of free resources for grantees' use in implementation efforts.

BACKGROUND:
Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to ensure that at least 10% of enrollment slots are occupied by children with disabilities. In fact, Head Start's founders and early pioneers recognized that both children with and without disabilities would benefit from participating together in the same classrooms. Since 1972, over 3 million children with disabilities have fully participated in Head Start.

The 2016 HSPPS provide additional specificity regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities within Head Start and Early Head Start programs. Additionally, at [45 CFR §§1302.62](#) and [1302.60](#), the HSPPS explicitly require that every effort be made to include and provide services to children identified with delays or suspected delays, even if they are not eligible for services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Section [640\(d\)\(1\)](#) of the Head Start Act defines the term "child with a disability" as:

- A child with a disability, as defined in section 602(3) of IDEA

"Head Start Program Performance Standards explicitly require that every effort be made to include and provide services to children identified with delays or suspected delays, even if they are not eligible for services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)."

Inclusion is for Everyone, Everywhere



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