



OREGON

Coordinated
Enrollment
Guidebook

 2021 Edition



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INTRODUCTION

Empowering healthy, stable, and attached families who can support their children’s development represents an early outcome along the pathway of ensuring all children arrive ready for kindergarten. By coordinating recruitment and connections, a community can ensure that families have equitable access to the full set of programs across their community and that they do not have to navigate meeting their needs on their own. This prioritization strengthens connections between programs and sectors across the early learning system.

There has been a growing movement across the country to build early childhood systems that provide more aligned, coordinated, and family-centered services, supports, and opportunities for children and their families. The Oregon Department of Education’s Early Learning Division (ELD) is using coordinated enrollment into early care and education (ECE) programs as a strategy for strengthening its broader early learning system. Coordinated enrollment is a system strategy that ensures that families can find and enroll in the services that support their child’s early learning and development, and that early learning programs are fully enrolled with the families who most need the services. Children’s development is supported and enhanced when they are raised in healthy, stable, attached, and empowered families who can engage them in high-quality early learning experiences and when families have access to opportunities and supports that help them thrive (e.g., comprehensive health services, affordable housing, livable wage employment, safe communities, healthy environments, etc.).

The Oregon Early Childhood Education System Theory of Change identifies the importance of a diverse array of accessible, high-quality services and supports across multiple sectors and domains (e.g., early learning and development, health and mental health, family leadership and support) and policies and practices that are aligned with goals for equitable early childhood development. Early Learning Hubs will oversee the coordination of an aligned, family-centered, and effective multi-sector early childhood system, with the ultimate impact of children being ready for kindergarten.

In 2020, Early Learning Hubs coordinated enrollment for Preschool Promise sites. Early Learning Hubs developed and deepened relationships with culturally specific programs, licensed center and home-based childcare, school districts, Head Start programs, Relief Nurseries, education service districts, and community-based organizations with Preschool Promise slots to ensure families had information about and access to high-quality preschool options that met their needs and preferences. They worked with systems partners that included Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) organizations, Head Start/Oregon Pre-kindergarten programs, and community-based organizations to reach families across the state and to implement enrollment processes. During the initial implementation, Early Learning Hubs and partners were faced with an unprecedented global pandemic and regional wildfires, but they remained flexible to policy changes and program waivers while centering family experience and choice.

The ELD’s overarching systems change strategy is focused on building toward coordination of enrollment over time across multiple programs and funding streams to strengthen Oregon’s ECE system and to connect families to services and supports in their communities. The immediate goal is to convene partners and to plan for coordinated

enrollment within the array of services in ECE programs, focusing on marketing, outreach, and recruitment. The longer-term goal is to deepen coordinated enrollment work across multiple early childhood programs and funding streams, including Head Start, subsidized childcare, early childhood special education (ECSE), and K-12 school district preschool. The overarching goal is to ensure approaches and strategies are informed by and designed with the unique needs and priorities of families in mind.

This guidebook outlines the ELD’s vision for coordinated enrollment in Oregon, informed by a 2019 review of the national landscape and case studies of five of Oregon’s Early Learning Hubs¹ with some prior experience coordinating enrollment across certain features of their early childhood system of supports. The guidebook also draws on the lessons learned during the ELD’s first year of experience implementing coordinated enrollment strategies through *Preschool Promise*. Each section of the guidebook details a part of Oregon’s coordinated enrollment vision and includes examples and resources that Early Learning Hubs can use to inform their work as they move forward in implementing coordinated enrollment.



THE WHAT, WHY, AND HOW OF COORDINATED ENROLLMENT

What Is Coordinated Enrollment?

Coordinated enrollment helps to ensure that all families are supported to make an informed choice about the care and education of their child through a simplified and coordinated process. This key strategy is facilitated by Early Learning Hubs in communities and is inclusive of all early childhood partners, programs, and systems in service of building an aligned, family-centered, and coordinated early learning system.

Coordinated Enrollment Is a Systems-Building Strategy

Oregon’s early learning system plan and vision.

Oregon’s early learning system plan, [Raise Up Oregon](#), was co-created by state and local leaders. They gathered input from families and professionals working in early learning across the state and identified three systems strategies. The plan’s goals intentionally cut across several sectors, including early care and education, health, housing and community development, human services, and K-12 education. Young children and their families experiencing poverty need more than one sector to help them close the opportunity gap. The strategic plan is guided by the state’s equity lens, which identifies the systemic and institutional barriers many Oregonians face and the belief that those children and families should be supported by intentional policies that address their needs.

¹ The case study Hubs were Washington County; Marion & Polk; Lane County; Linn, Benton & Lincoln; and South-Central.

Coordinating enrollment aligns with the vision outlined in Raise Up Oregon. Quality early learning and care programs help children arrive ready for kindergarten, which reflects System Goal 1 in Raise Up Oregon. Strategy 2.2 focuses on expanding access to high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate), affordable preschool that meets the needs of families. The increase in access to preschool is particularly important to families in childcare deserts, and this strategy calls for the support of Early Learning Hubs to create coordinated preschool enrollment processes. The effort to coordinate enrollment also addresses Raise Up Oregon’s System Goal 3: the early learning system is aligned, coordinated, and family-centered. Identifying the regional Early Learning Hub as the central convener to plan processes allows for localized approaches to support families as they navigate the referral process. Creating a family-centered system requires the inclusion of family voice and a focus on family-informed decision-making.

Through coordinated enrollment, the state of Oregon and local communities continue to build on the strategic vision outlined in Raise Up Oregon, using ECE sector planning to ensure the vision is informed and shared by all of the communities and stakeholders—including families. This requires intentional outreach to co-develop a consensus around the goals and mission of a coordinated enrollment system. Once the shared vision is established, it is important to have it visible and reiterated frequently to key staff and stakeholders for it to be truly shared and endorsed.

Coordinated Enrollment Is a Family-Centered Strategy

Oregon’s commitment to centering families.

The Oregon Early Childhood Education System Theory of Change includes centering families as a key element of an effective multi-sector system. Supports and services must be easy to navigate and guided by family voice. Effective coordinated enrollment is a key element of an early education system designed to center families. Families must be included as partners in regional coordinated enrollment planning facilitated by Early Learning Hubs. Feedback on families’ experiences throughout coordinated enrollment should guide future planning and continuous quality improvement efforts. In short, all coordinated enrollment planning, processes, and procedures are guided by the needs, experiences, and preferences of families seeking early care and education programs and services. With an equitable, family-centered approach to coordinated enrollment embedded within a strong multi-sector state system, families can:

- Access the information they need about programs in their community
- Find support for navigating the eligibility, enrollment, and placement process
- Be assured the unique needs of their children will be addressed and considered

North Carolina’s vision includes four major goals: to engage and embrace families through a holistic approach, to achieve optimum development for children, to provide access to available resources, and to coordinate resources for families and children across programs. The state recently launched an Early Childhood Action Plan with 10 goals related to its holistic vision for child development. It focuses on three areas: promoting health and safety, nurturing families and communities, and enhancing readiness for school success. This information is summarized in the North Carolina Partnership for Children’s *Smart Start Strategic Roadmap*.

Coordinated Enrollment Is a Collaboration-Focused Strategy

No single early care and education program or provider can serve all families and prepare all children for kindergarten in the current public financing and supply landscape. Success in a coordinated enrollment process is

measured by the full enrollment across all participating programs in a region and by ensuring that all children with special needs have access to programs that provide services that meet those needs. Within a community, existing publicly funded ECE programs each have their own processes that include program requirements on how to conduct work within the components of coordinated enrollment. Successfully implementing coordinated enrollment includes actively reaching out to and consistently collaborating with publicly funded ECE programs to develop shared understanding of the processes, infrastructure, and capacity already in place that the community can leverage and build upon to support full enrollment in all participating programs.

We interviewed Oregon early learning system leaders and program administrators from other states who are implementing coordinated enrollment strategies. According to these interviewees, successful coordinated enrollment needs to be integrated into broader efforts to build coordinated local early learning systems. Having a strategic vision and shared leadership across state and local leaders is critically important.

“The key is who you have as the point person for bringing groups together. You need a good facilitator, a person who knows the relationships. They can set up a process where everyone will be respected, and there is opportunity for everyone to have input.”

—State Program Administrator

“Strong relationships have helped build the system—relationships between CCR&Rs and providers, trusted providers and parents, and providers and community Hubs.”

—Oregon Early Learning System Leader

The work of coordinating enrollment is relationship-based. As a systems-building initiative, implementation of coordinated enrollment requires trusting and respectful relationships across the system. It will take a strong network of the ELD team, Hub staff, and local providers for this to be successful. State and local leadership will need to be inclusive and think broadly to include not only ECE program administrators and providers but also families, the business community, private funders, the university community, and others. Such partnerships help state and local communities leverage the existing investments and organizations that are committed to early learning systems building. Effective leaders identify where there is agreement, collaboration, and coordination and implement processes to ensure everyone’s ideas are heard.

“Coordination [needs to be] valued over competition. We see turf battles across programs.... Each program thinks coordination may harm their enrollment numbers.”

—State Program Administrator

All program administrators from other states stressed the importance of having a vision and mission statement that all participating programs and partners buy into and support. They also stressed that leadership needs to widely disseminate the vision and mission statement across the community and continuously refer to it when working with programs, partners, and other stakeholders. Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) in North Minneapolis, for example, developed a broad strategic vision:

- **Our mission is to end generational poverty and build a culture of achievement in North Minneapolis where all low-income children of color graduate from high school college- and career-ready. We accomplish this through collaboration with parents, community organizations, and schools.**
- **(From: NAZ, “Mission and Values”)**

New Mexico’s vision for a coordinated early learning system, developed as part of the state’s Preschool Development Grant Birth through Five, is summarized below:

In states with well-integrated early childhood systems, coordination of early childhood programs at the highest levels of administration supports consistent high-quality, streamlined services for families, and efficient resource allocation. Effective early childhood governance should promote:

- coordination across the different parts and programs of the early childhood system
- coherence across system-wide tasks like data collection, quality standards, and outcome measurement
- efficient allocation of resources
- sustainability across political and leadership changes
- accountability for both individual programs and system-wide outcomes

Why Coordinate Enrollment?

A well-implemented coordinated enrollment system that has a single point of intake or a single application for preschool programming benefits families through ease of application and relieves them of the need to navigate a complicated landscape of program offerings. A system that selects and places children with providers using both parent preferences and preestablished, transparent selection criteria also ensures families are served in a manner that best fits their needs yet is equitable. Because recruitment and placement is done at a systems level, where all providers’ open slots are monitored in real time, this type of system also benefits providers by increasing the likelihood that they will be fully enrolled. This coordination allows the community as a whole to serve more families more effectively, which strengthens the early childhood system.

“I am excited to see a system where a prenatal family can log onto a website or call a number and get connected to services. One application, one point of entry—all the services.”

—Oregon Early Learning System Leader

The goal of all state and local early childhood systems-building work is to impact outcomes for children, guaranteeing that all families and children have equitable access to the opportunities necessary to meet their needs, advance their well-being, and achieve their full potential.

According to [Louisiana's Early Childhood Guidebook \(2015\)](#): Families should be able to apply through shared processes in their community and be more satisfied with their children's experience. No single early childhood provider (schools, Head Start, or childcare) can serve all families and prepare all children for kindergarten. Coordinated enrollment results in the greatest number of children in each community being served as:

- Families know of all available seats
 - Families have an easy way to know what they are eligible for and apply
 - Families do not occupy more than one seat, for maximum use of available seats
- (From: *Louisiana's Early Childhood Guidebook*, 2015)

Partners understand the “WHY” of coordinating enrollment

“We have a common goal—we are working toward the same end of meeting the needs of parents.”

“Nobody has enough and we need to help each other—we are all in this together.”

“Let's replicate pulling together as a community and making sure all children are served.”



How to Coordinate Enrollment

Oregon operationalizes coordinated enrollment with three “buckets” of community work related to the enrollment process for publicly funded early care and education (ECE) programs:



The three buckets are typically conceptualized as linear: communities start with joint outreach and recruitment before moving to coordinating eligibility determination and finally to selection and placement. Encircling this system is a process of continuous quality improvement, where data are collected, analyzed, and used to inform the activities conducted within each bucket. Overall, implementation across these three buckets can span a continuum ranging from partner organizations just beginning to communicate with each other about how to market as a single entity, to partner organizations fully coordinating across all three buckets, culminating in the use of a single community process for selecting and placing children with providers.

When coordinated enrollment is fully implemented in Oregon, communities will follow this annual sequence to coordinate and align programmatic processes and timelines within the region:

Spring	Summer		Fall	Winter
Marketing, outreach, and recruitment	Eligibility determination and programming	Selection and placement	Start of new program year services	Assess coordinated enrollment processes and revise coordinated enrollment plan
Coordinate information campaigns so families know about publicly funded ECE options in their community	Create aligned ways for families to know what they are eligible for and learn about program features	Align timelines for selection and placement into programs, led by family choice	Provide ongoing enrollment options throughout the year	Use qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate implementation and create shared agreement on any revisions to the coordinated enrollment plan

Plan for coordinated enrollment.

“My wish for 2021: More collaborations around the enrollment experience for families and greater alignment in enrollment timelines and planning for collaborative processes.”

—Oregon Early Learning System Leader

Early Learning Hubs will convene families and partners as a Regional Stewardship Committee to create community coordinated enrollment plans. Large Hub regions may choose to plan for coordinated enrollment at a county or local level to best serve families in their communities and better reflect available programs. Program administrators from other states emphasized the need for and the value of local strategic planning to build coordination at the local level. They noted that decisions need to be made about which programs are going to be coordinated and which partners will be included. Those programs, partners, and other stakeholders then need to develop a shared strategic vision to support positive collaborative leadership and establish and maintain a governance body charged with planning and oversight functions. For example, Head Start and TANF have existing enrollment processes that articulate how to determine eligibility, select children for services, and place them in settings that best meet their needs. Consider what enrollment processes already exist that might be leveraged but also need to be coordinated with.

Determine programs to coordinate.

In Oregon, coordinated enrollment was first implemented within Preschool Promise with Early Learning Hubs coordinating enrollment specifically for slots within this program within their region. Many communities also implemented coordinated recruitment or shared enrollment processes with other program partners. Further implementation of coordinated enrollment will eventually engage additional ECE programs in coordinated enrollment strategies, which may include Head Start/Oregon Pre-kindergarten, Baby Promise, EI/ECSE, K-12 preschool, and other local ECE programs.

Different local early learning coalitions coordinate with different types of programs. For example, in Florida, there are 30 [early learning coalitions](#) across the state. The state Office of Early Learning serves as the overarching administrative body, but each local coalition has a good deal of flexibility in how it operates. All local coalitions in Florida operate both the subsidized childcare and the Voluntary Prekindergarten programs, but some also coordinate with Head Start and Early Head Start. Some also coordinate with Part C early intervention (EI) and Part B 619 early childhood special education (ECSE).

In Itasca County, a large, mainly rural area in Minnesota, local coalitions developed a local early learning collaboration called [Invest Early](#) over 15 years ago. This entity coordinates its state pre-K program (mixed delivery across multiple school districts and community-based pre-K and childcare programs), Head Start, and the state’s early childhood family education program (birth to kindergarten age, offered through the school districts). Invest Early has a single point of entry, with a common application form that families complete, and program staff meet to match each family with programs based on eligibility and family needs ([Early Childhood Enrollment Application](#)).

Northside Achievement Zone ([NAZ](#)) in North Minneapolis has developed intentional agreements with a set of partners that includes nonprofits and community-based preschool and childcare programs—with high quality ratings in the state’s Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), Parent Aware—and preschool and family education programs in the [Minneapolis Public Schools](#).

As coordinated enrollment is implemented, children with special needs will possibly be included in classroom settings with providers who need additional professional development and support. State teams should assess what supports providers will need to develop inclusive classrooms and implement responsive teaching practices and ensure that all providers are educated about federal, state, and local guidelines and prepared to support families. The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs has an Early Childhood Technical Assistance (ECTA) Center focused on supporting this work, and it could be leveraged to provide state and local staff with assistance on inclusion.

Collect and use data.

State and local leaders should develop a plan to monitor progress toward goals using data. This may include developing success metrics, ensuring processes for collecting the right data to assess progress toward the metrics, and potentially training staff to use existing data systems for this purpose. It may also be possible to obtain funding to conduct progress evaluations.

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State data systems and infrastructure are integrated and support:

- accountability and data-driven improvement;
- state to local to provider connections and feedback loops; and
- efficient allocation of resources that ensures prioritization of highest need or underserved populations.

(From: A Business Plan for Early Childhood in New Mexico, 2018)

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In 2019 and biennially thereafter, Early Learning Hubs convened Regional Stewardship Committees to complete regional ECE sector plans, reviewing local data and engaging families and stakeholders to identify priority populations in their area. These plans informed selection of Preschool Promise providers in 2020. Communities will use data collected through their coordinated enrollment efforts to understand the effectiveness of their coordinated enrollment strategies and will use these and other data to improve their regional coordinated enrollment processes and procedures. Engaging families in examining and interpreting data in light of their own and other families’ lived experiences will go a long way toward filling gaps and creating a responsive, contextualized, and family-centered enrollment system.

Program administrators stressed the importance of collecting and using data to understand local context, monitoring and evaluating progress toward goals, making improvements in programs and systems, and advocating for funding to support programs and infrastructure. They noted that data about child outcomes, program quality, and other indicators of progress from systems-building and coordination activities were used to help them improve their programs and were also used to tell compelling stories when advocating for funding. For instance, in Minnesota, Itasca County’s Invest Early collaborative has received ongoing funding from the Blandin Foundation with the stipulation that Invest Early collect data and conduct [annual evaluations](#) of its programs’ impacts on children and families and program quality.

Invest Early has used other state grant funds (e.g., the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant) to support these activities. NAZ, funded by a Promise Neighborhood grant, developed a data system that it uses for continuous improvement, to [collect data](#) to track progress on children’s school readiness and long-term school success, and to support its fundraising activities by pointing to its positive results for children and families. The organization has data governance done by a data team that tracks collection, entry, and use of data. NAZ also conducts internal and external evaluations and shares results with the schools through a third-party evaluator.

As part of developing its [Early Childhood Action Plan](#), North Carolina worked with stakeholders across the state to identify performance measures to track progress. For instance, they have identified that the plan will lower childhood mortality rate, reduce time in foster care, and increase kindergarten school readiness. Information is disseminated in [data dashboards](#) that include these indicators. For example, 75 percent of eligible children will be served through the North Carolina Prekindergarten Program (NC Pre-K).

These examples highlight how important it is for local coalitions to evaluate the impacts of their work, using resulting data to improve programs and advocate for funding and other supports for long-term sustainability.



STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING COORDINATED ENROLLMENT

Community strategies for implementing coordinated enrollment should be guided by the needs, experiences, and preferences of the families seeking early care and education programs and services within the region or community. Within each bucket of coordinated enrollment work there are examples from communities in other states and in Hub regions that may be helpful to refer to when planning to coordinate enrollment. Efforts were in varying stages of implementation, but each community had experiences to share that are informative. These examples are synthesized into strategies related to each of the three buckets of coordinated enrollment.

Marketing, Outreach, and Recruitment Strategies

For families to choose programs and services that meet their needs, it is essential to have an **effective marketing and information dissemination strategy**. Local coalitions need to involve the right partners and get messages out to them regularly using a variety of approaches well suited to local contexts. Families have questions about how they might find a program that they need. Communities could respond to this need through a centralized universal contact point for accessing programs and services.

Additionally, it is important for families to be able to identify which programs or services are available in their community and if they are eligible for them. This bucket of work could result in a comprehensive community directory with information about the whole range of services and supports families need to access, especially for high-need families. This should also center culturally and linguistically responsive practices to support access to early learning programs for all families. This information should also be provided in a way that is accessible to families who speak a language other than English and have children who are dual language learners and should let them know how programs are culturally and linguistically responsive. Information should be available for families of children with identified disabilities that will help them understand how to access inclusive programs that are prepared to meet their child's individual needs. During the marketing, outreach, and recruitment phase, programs need to be prepared to communicate to families how they will coordinate across programs (if children are participating in more than one program and families want that communication to occur).

Local communities could conduct community resource mapping as a strategy to define the programs/services they want to coordinate and then create a map of local programs that can be made available on a website or via another mechanism. Some local areas go beyond disseminating information about early learning programs and services; they also include information about broader family resources such as food banks, mental health services and crisis hotlines, health services, family support services, and job training and employment supports. Partners within regions and communities could focus on strategic planning for accessing available revenue sources to fund programs and services, and for creating integrated data-system and data-sharing agreements to facilitate coordination and collaboration and share information across programs.

Many approaches are used effectively across the country, such as having dedicated websites for early learning coalitions; resource directories, including collaborating with local Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) organizations ([Child Care Aware® of America](#) works with over 400 CCR&R agencies across the country); 211 phone lines;² and strategies that include holding events in local communities at a variety of venues (schools, libraries, community centers, community forums, etc.). To reach providers, programs, and schools, many states use existing professional development events, newsletters, mass mailings, or websites to get information out to stakeholders.

- In Florida, the state [Office of Early Learning](#) has a website with a statewide map and [links to county coalitions](#) (e.g., [Miami-Dade County Early Learning Coalition](#)), and all local coalitions are required to have a communications plan about how to get information out to the community.
- In Cuyahoga County in Ohio (Cleveland area), coalitions engage in strategic efforts to help parents understand the funding that is available and what high-quality pre-K looks like and how to find it via their website [Pre4Cle](#). On this website, parents can use an [eligibility calculator](#) that tells them what funding streams might be available to them. They also have two dedicated staff who are outreach specialists, and they do events in the communities. They also have developed a coordinated multimedia campaign that includes running television, radio, digital media, and social media ads.
- In North Minneapolis, NAZ's approach to outreach is to work directly through [its partners](#), who do the outreach in their immediate community.

² 211 lines are toll-free telephone lines that refer callers to organizations that provide a wide range of services in local communities.

- A similar approach is used by Invest Early in Itasca County, where dedicated staff do outreach and disseminate information to partner programs and school districts, who in turn work with their local families, often via mass mailings.

Early Learning Hubs in Oregon have started implementing effective marketing, outreach, and recruitment strategies:

- **Create joint marketing materials that direct families to the Hub and communicate program options to families in a way that helps them make informed decisions.** Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub is an example of a Hub where Head Start grantees and Preschool Promise providers conduct joint marketing. They produce bus ads and yard signs directing families to call the Hub for “Free Preschool,” have a flyer that describes in clear terms the income eligibility guidelines for various providers in the community, and use social media campaigns. Hillsboro School District in Washington County hosts an early learning fair that 19 organizations participate in to advertise, make connections, and support enrollment in services. As a collective effort across organizations in the catchment area, it strengthens those partnerships and fosters important connections with families.
- **Create a brand that is recognizable to families and providers.** Several of the Hubs have branded referral systems that primarily serve families with children ages 0–3 but are examples of how name recognition and successful branding can draw families into a system that then connects them to an entire network of services. Pollywog (Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties), Community UPLiFT (South-Central Early Learning Hub), and Help Me Grow (Early Learning Washington County) are all recognizable brands.
- **Develop a single intake form for use across providers or multiple programs.** The ELD team has developed a single application for use across all Preschool Promise providers in a region, and all Early Learning Hubs created preschool screening forms for Preschool Promise enrollment in 2020. Marion & Polk experimented briefly with asking families who were seeking publicly funded preschool to fill out a single “participant interest form” that Hub staff would then enter into Google Forms for all providers to be able to access.

Eligibility Determination and Programming Strategies

Families seeking to enroll into programs or services should experience a **timely and streamlined eligibility determination process** that allows them to access multiple services for which they are eligible in a way that is not duplicative. The enrollment piece of collaboration and coordination happens at the local level and not at the state level, so local communities need to develop strategies to have a central intake and referral process, or a single point of entry such as an online portal that is a one-stop shop for parents and providers.

To achieve these kinds of coordinated enrollment procedures that streamline the process and meet the needs of families in their area, local coalitions could develop a crosswalk of eligibility requirements across programs, develop memorandum of understanding (MOU) or interagency agreements to work across programs and systems, establish data-sharing agreements, and consider funding dedicated staff or work out ways to share staff to accomplish coordination in eligibility determination. Families want to know what funds are available to support their child’s participation in programming and about practical issues around eligibility for transportation if needed. This points to the need for a timely eligibility determination and intake process after initial referral to programs and services.

Other strategies are used across the country. All of these strategies involve gathering information from families and then matching them with programs and other services based on meeting eligibility requirements and family needs and preferences (e.g., location, need for full-time care, etc.).

- Itasca County in Minnesota uses a [single application](#) for early learning programs.
- Cuyahoga County in Ohio uses an online application with a calculator to determine which [preschool programs](#) a family is eligible for.
- North Minneapolis uses personal referrals by staff in partner early childhood programs, and each family gets a coach through NAZ who helps them connect to programs and services and develop a comprehensive family achievement plan ([family achievement plan in the NAZ Connect Tool](#)).

Early Learning Hubs in Oregon have started implementing eligibility determination and programming strategies:

- **Establish a mechanism to determine eligibility across programs/funding streams.** As an example, Hub staff at both Marion & Polk and Lane Early Learning Alliance (Lane County) have done some manual coordinated eligibility determination across Head Start and Preschool Promise providers by using a crosswalk of income guidelines and then directing families toward the program that may be the better fit, with income as a main consideration.
- **Outline all relevant programming and enrollment timelines between providers and programs.** As Hubs move into coordinating enrollment across more than one program, staff will need to align the timelines of the programs they are trying to coordinate across. Marion & Polk is an example of a Hub that currently does this in order to recruit families for Head Start and Preschool Promise jointly.
- **Align data elements needed across providers and programs to streamline the enrollment data-sharing process.** Examples of data elements that are ideal candidates for collection across all providers include child age, family income, and family program preferences. Using a single application (such as the one developed for Preschool Promise) can facilitate this.

Selection and Placement Strategies

Families want to know how they can enroll their child in a program they are eligible for as quickly as possible, and how they can move easily from one program to another as their needs change or as their child gets older. This calls for seamless and timely transitions across programs and services from birth to kindergarten. Also, families want to make sure that their child is not required to move unnecessarily from program to program, so selection and placement strategies must prioritize minimizing disruptions in receipt of services due to eligibility and access challenges. These reflect the need for transparent community selection and placement strategies that are aligned across programs and services.

Develop transparent selection criteria based on priority populations; providers jointly select children for placement after considering best fit for a family; after placement, assess how well family needs are being met; and develop a process for real-time, shared waitlists. One example of a local community that was fully coordinating enrollment all the way through selection and placement is the Tigard-Tualatin School District in Washington County. Families there complete a joint intake form for a number of programs, including Head Start, Preschool Promise, school district preschool, Northwest

Regional Education Service District (ESD), and Latino Network programs. The eligibility information on the intake form has enough detail to identify who is likely eligible for a Preschool Promise slot or slots with various other programs. Behind the scenes, providers connect with each other about the availability of slots. Especially during peak enrollment time, but with some regularity throughout the year, individuals in partnering organizations meet to discuss placement and plan for enrollment into available slots. The organization that sounds like the best fit for the family contacts the family directly to discuss available services. Individuals in the partnering organizations have access to a shared Google Sheet that is updated in real time with information from the joint intake form as well as information about handoff to a specific provider for follow-up and likely enrollment. The provider receiving the referral inputs information about final enrollment on the Google Sheet so partners can see the family's progress in placement and continue to identify any families with unmet needs. Since all the partnering agencies can see the list of families waiting for enrollment, this functions as a joint waitlist. Each program keeps its own database to capture information about service delivery and to handle individual reporting.



COORDINATED ENROLLMENT TAKES TIME

Coordinated enrollment is a system strategy that ensures that families can find and enroll in the services that support their child's early learning and development, and that early learning programs are fully enrolled with the families who most need the services. As a systems-change initiative, implementing coordinated enrollment is an iterative and ongoing process that takes time to understand, design, and implement. With the goal of empowering healthy, stable, and attached families and ensuring all children arrive ready for kindergarten, communities have the opportunity to engage families in the system of care and education and ensure families have equitable access to the full set of programs across their community without having to navigate meeting their needs on their own.

As one of just a few states in the country working to implement this process statewide, Oregon is participating in a unique learning community focused on innovative and effective early learning strategies that support meaningful outcomes for children and families. This work will support continued movement toward success for all children in preparing them for school and life.

- **THIS IS HARD WORK THAT TAKES TIME**
- *“While we have done some great things, we’re still working daily to make this happen. It’s something that you can’t just create and walk away from, you have to constantly work at continuing those relationships, continuing those discussions ... because people change, programs change, requirements change. And you have to continue to work at it.” —Other State Leader Interviewee*



APPENDIX: RESOURCES ABOUT EARLY LEARNING SYSTEMS COORDINATION AND COORDINATED ENROLLMENT

In this annotated bibliography, we have described a set of national and state resources relevant to the topic of early learning systems building and coordination and coordinated enrollment. For each resource, we provide the citation, a live link to the resource on the web, the type of document or resource, and a brief description of the resource. The description provides information about what the resource contains, some of the highlights contained in the resource, and a recommendation about how the state of Oregon might use the resource and what audiences might find the resource useful. The final section contains specific resources provided by the state and administrative leaders whom we interviewed.

Federal or Overview Reports and Resources

Citation: Hayden, P., Frederick, L., Smith, B. J., & Broudy, A. (2001). *Developmental facilitation: Helping teams promote systems change*. Denver, CO: Center for Collaborative Educational Leadership.

Link: [Helping teams promote systems change](#)

Type of Resource: Report

Brief Description: This resource is a report about how to support “local collaborative teams that are striving to put in place inclusive, quality, comprehensive early care and education services to young children and their families.” It describes a model in which a facilitator worked with local community teams to implement systems change that would increase collaboration among the local teams. The model consists of five developmental stages. This document would be useful to Oregon because it outlines concrete steps teams can take, as well as roles and expectations for the facilitator and individual team members to follow. It could be applicable to administrators and practitioners working in programs and agencies at both the state and local levels. Additionally, this document may be used to coordinate services with programs beyond ECE/ECSE (such as health programs) to provide a comprehensive service package to families.

Citation: Early Childhood Systems Working Group (2013). *Comprehensive early childhood system-building: A tool to inform discussions on collaborative, cross-sector planning*.

Link: [Collaboration discussion tool](#)

Type of Resource: Brief and discussion tool

Brief Description: This document, created by a voluntary group of leaders who provide technical assistance to state and local policymakers, is a discussion tool based on a popular model of early childhood system building. This model advocates for collaborations between Health, Early Learning and Development, and Family Support and Leadership systems to comprise a comprehensive early childhood system of services. Additionally, six key strategies to support these collaborations are described in detail. The tool is designed for facilitators to elicit discussions between state and local stakeholders from multiple sectors. This is a guide Oregon can use to define and plan strategies for coordinating services. This tool also provides information that can inform goal development and plans for the evaluation of these goals. It is appropriate for policymakers, administrators, and service providers at the state and local levels.

Citation: Atchison, B., & Diffey, L. (2018). *Governance in early childhood education*. Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States.

Link: [Early childhood governance](#)

Type of Resource: Policy report

Brief Description: This document is a report that presents strategies to streamline early childhood governance at the state level. It outlines three strategies, but notes little research is available to support advocacy of one particular strategy over the others: (1) creation of a dedicated early childhood agency, (2) consolidation of existing programs and divisions into one state agency, and (3) collaboration and coordination across different agencies. This report subsequently provides examples of states that have enacted one or more of these governance structures, as well as policy considerations for states seeking to streamline their own early childhood governance structures. Though Oregon’s current structure consists of Early Learning Hubs, this resource may provide guidance in terms of examining and optimizing the current structure to meet the needs of alignment and coordination. This document is appropriate for policymakers and program administrators.

Citation: Regenstein, E. (2017). *An unofficial guide to the why and how of state early childhood data systems*. Chicago, IL: Ounce of Prevention Fund.

Link: [Early childhood data systems](#)

Type of Resource: Policy report

Brief Description: This reader-friendly document provides a guide to the development of statewide early childhood data systems and is systematically divided into four sections. First, the rationale and benefits of state early childhood data systems are presented. Next, the report describes how certain states have developed their data systems. The final two sections discuss the capacities necessary to effectively use these data systems, and privacy and security concerns that arise from developing a large data system. As state early childhood systems are integral to coordinated enrollment and program alignment, this resource may be a valuable resource for Oregon to use in planning for data and data systems components of its early learning system. Due to its readability, it is appropriate for a variety of stakeholders, including policymakers, state and local program administrators, legal staff, and practitioners.

Citation: GAO-17-671T: *Early learning and child care: Overview of federal investment and agency coordination: Testimony before the Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education, Committee on Education and the Workforce, House of Representatives* (2017) (testimony of Cindy Brown Barnes).

Link: [Federal investment and agency coordination testimony](#)

Type of Resource: Federal testimony

Brief Description: This document is federal testimony from the Director of Education, Workforce, and Income Security in 2017. It provides a summary of programs that make up federal investment in early learning and childcare, the extent to which the programs are fragmented, overlap, or are duplicative, and the programs' performance. The document outlines how coordination across agencies has improved as a result of defining outcomes, developing recommendations, improving coordination, and tracking progress toward goals.

Citation: Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center. (2015). *A system framework for building high-quality early intervention and preschool special education programs*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center.

Link: [ECTA system framework](#)

Type of Resource: Website

Brief Description: This resource is a framework about the components of a high-quality state early learning system, developed for Part C and Part B 619 early intervention and early childhood special education state systems, but it is relevant to the broader early learning systems in states. In the framework, detailed information is provided about characteristics of an effective state service system in six major areas: governance, finance, personnel/workforce, data system, accountability and quality improvement, and quality standards. For each component, the framework defines quality indicators and specific elements of quality. Oregon can use this resource to evaluate the quality of areas particularly relevant to coordinated enrollment, such as governance, finance, and data system, and use an accompanying self-assessment for strategic planning and system improvement activities around finance ([ECTA System: Framework Self-Assessment](#)). The resource is appropriate for use by state and local administrators for strategic planning purposes.

Citation: Haskins, R., & Barnett, W. S. (2010). New directions for America's early childhood policies. In R. Haskins & W. S. Barnett (Eds.), *Investing in young children: New directions in federal preschool and early childhood policy* (pp. 1–28). New Brunswick, NJ: Brookings Institution.

Link: [Coordinating early childhood systems](#)

Type of Resource: Policy report

Brief Description: This freely available book chapter, published during the Obama administration, examines how successful early childhood programs—specifically, Head Start, Early Head Start, and home visiting programs—are in preparing children for school. The study's findings suggested these programs were not fully meeting their potential, and the report provided recommendations for improvements. Along with calls for ongoing evaluations of these programs, the chapter provided a relatively early call for coordinating multiple early childhood systems using federal funds. Oregon may use this resource to gain historical perspective on coordinating systems and developing ideas for outcomes that should be measured during evaluations of the effectiveness of their ECE/ECSE programs. This resource is appropriate for use by policymakers and state and local program administrators.

Citation: *Policy Resource: Collaborative Planning and System-Building in Early Childhood Systems*.

Link: [Collaborative planning examples](#)

Type of Resource: Web link containing multiple resources

Brief Description: This resource is a web link on the Zero to Three website that provides multiple state and local examples of how “to develop a system that addresses the needs of young children and their families in a broad-based and coordinated way.” This resource is appropriate for state and local program administrators.

Citation: *Early Childhood Systems Working Group.*

Link: [Early childhood systems working group resources](#)

Type of Resource: Web link containing multiple resources

Brief Description: This resource is a web link on the BUILD Initiative website that provides an overview and multiple resources from the Early Childhood Systems Working Group to support state system-building efforts. It contains a framework for a comprehensive early childhood system and a variety of tools that state and local staff can use to plan and “implement an integrated system of policies, services and programs that helps leaders and stakeholders work more effectively together toward common goals for children.” This resource is appropriate for state and local program administrators.

Citation: Council of Chief State School Officers. (2017). *New early childhood coordination requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers.

Link: [Early childhood coordination in ESSA](#)

Type of Resource: Toolkit

Brief Description: This toolkit provides information and a large number of resources to facilitate coordination between LEAs receiving Title I funds and Head Start, as required by ESSA. Though the requirement is between LEAs and Head Start, this toolkit also provides information for SEAs to facilitate the development of the agreements. Two highlights of this toolkit are in Appendices F and G. Appendix F contains a self-assessment for LEAs and Head Start programs to identify areas that can support agreements and whether those areas are strong or need improvement. Appendix G contains sample MOUs/MOAs, including a generic MOU/MOA and actual MOUs/MOAs that represent strong partnerships between LEAs and local Head Start or other early childhood programs. This toolkit is appropriate for state- and local-level program administrators.

Citation: Stewart, F. (2018). *Building together: Collaborative leadership in early childhood systems*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Link: [Collaborative leadership](#)

Type of Resource: Book

Brief Description: This book discusses leadership skills “necessary to address today’s challenges and opportunities in the field of early childhood education.” In addition to information, it includes stories from professionals as well as stories from the author, who is a program director for a network partnership in Los Angeles. The book focuses on programs serving children ages 0–8 and is written for both new and experienced leaders. This resource is appropriate for state and local program administrators.

Citation: Maxwell, K. L., Sosinsky, L., & Tout, K. (2016). *Mapping the early care and education monitoring landscape*. OPRE Research Brief #2016-20. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Link: [Monitoring across early education programs](#)

Type of Resource: Guidance document

Brief Description: This resource is a guidance document developed by the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, about how states can coordinate monitoring across different types of early care and education programs and their varied regulations. This document contains worksheets organized into seven sections based on considerations administrators should be aware of when planning to coordinate programs. The worksheets are designed for major federal and state funding streams. Links to state examples of crosswalks across multiple early childhood programs are also included. This would be an important resource for Oregon as the state seeks to coordinate enrollment across early childhood programs, as it provides a systematic foundation for this work. It is appropriate for state and local program administrators.

Citation: Center for the Study of Social Policy. (2019). *Early childhood system performance assessment toolkit*. Washington, DC: Center for the Study of Social Policy.

Link: [Early childhood system performance assessment toolkit](#)

Type of Resource: Toolkit

Brief Description: This document provides a framework and a set of performance measures to support systems' self-assessment in terms of reach, coordination, commitment, and equity. These measures are designed to foster and improve a coordinated and comprehensive system of services across sectors of early learning and development, health, and family leadership and support. The measures are flexible and are able to be adapted to the needs of a particular system, but guidelines for their use are provided along with what data sources are necessary to complete the measures. A highlight of this toolkit is that it includes sample interpretations of data, as well as action planning worksheets to guide steps that result from the findings. Oregon can use this toolkit to help incorporate plans for data collection and evaluation as the state develops its coordinated enrollment system. Additionally, this toolkit can aid Oregon in proactively identifying and addressing needs that may arise during the development of a coordinated enrollment system. This toolkit is appropriate for state and local program administrators across a variety of early childhood programs and services.

State and Local Examples

Citation: Louisiana Department of Education. (2015). *Louisiana's early childhood guidebook: Preparing children for kindergarten; strengthening early childhood programs & community networks*.

Link: [Louisiana's early childhood guidebook](#); see also: [Louisiana coordinated funding request](#); [Louisiana coordinated enrollment and funding website](#); [Louisiana Believes PowerPoint \(2018\)](#); [Updated Coordinated Enrollment Self-Assessment Survey 2019](#)

Type of Resource: Guidebook

Brief Description: Louisiana developed this guidebook after the state passed a law to coordinate preschool, Head Start, and childcare programs into a unified statewide network for early childhood. Having learned lessons from pilot programs, the state developed this document to provide information intended to strengthen Community Networks in terms of three building blocks: (1) Collaborative Leadership, (2) Teacher Support, and (3) Coordinated Enrollment. This resource is particularly relevant to Oregon's work because it provides concrete steps for developing coordinated enrollment and vignettes of successful Community Networks. Additionally, the appendices specify important considerations ranging from building a coordinated enrollment plan to teacher training. This resource is appropriate for policymakers, state- and local-level administrators, and practitioners.

Citation: Melnick, H., Meloy, B., Gardner, M., Wechsler, M., & Maier, A. (2018). *Building an early learning system that works: Next steps for California*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Link: [California’s early learning system](#)

Type of Resource: Policy report

Brief Description: This comprehensive report examines multiple aspects of California’s early care and education (ECE) system—including administration, access for families, workforce, program quality, and data systems—and provides policy recommendations. It describes challenges faced by California’s ECE system, including those arising as a result of a patchwork system and complex administrative structure. However, it also provides examples of counties that have successfully coordinated and streamlined their services. The focus of the report is on services at the county level. Because this report examines California ECE at the county level, the policy recommendations may be useful for Oregon with respect to its Early Learning Hubs. This document is appropriate for policymakers and program administrators.

Citation: Nebraska Department of Education. (2017). *A guide to serving children birth to kindergarten entrance age in center-based early childhood programs operated by public school districts, educational service units and their community partners*.

Link: [Nebraska early education guide](#)

Type of Resource: Guidance document

Brief Description: This document, from the Nebraska Department of Education, was written to support public school districts or educational service units (ESUs) in developing and implementing ECE programs from birth to kindergarten entrance age. A section of the document focuses on coordination and collaboration among services rather than keeping funding sources siloed. It demonstrates that children can be enrolled in more than one program if the district or ESU increases their services or the duration of services (e.g., half-day to full-day). A highlight of this document is that Appendix C contains an example of a coordinated partnership agreement. This document can be used by administrators at both state and local levels.

Citation: *Palmetto Pre-K: South Carolina’s Publicly-Funded Pre-K Programs*.

Link: [Palmetto South Carolina website](#)

Type of Resource: Website

Brief Description: This website is from South Carolina and is an example of coordinated enrollment that provides a single point of entry for families. It contains a web-based enrollment form that families can use to check eligibility and access to preschool programs in their area.

Citation: *United Way of Roanoke Valley Smart2Start Program*.

Link: [Roanoke application](#)

Type of Resource: Website

Brief Description: This website is from Roanoke Valley in Virginia. It contains an example of a single online application that parents complete to apply to public schools, early education programs, and private providers simultaneously. This particular application is accepted by nearly 150 providers in four counties.

Resources from Interviews with Other States

Below are links to websites and resources from the state administrators and local leaders we interviewed. These resources provide examples of how other states' local early learning coalitions operate and market what they do in their local communities.

Florida's Early Learning Coalitions (Office of Early Learning – OEL)

- [State Office of Early Learning Coalitions](#)
- [EL Coalition Documents \(Guidance\)](#)
- [EL Coalition Resources](#)
- [EL Coalition Monitoring](#)
- [OEL State Initiatives](#)
- [OEL for Parents](#)
- [OEL for Providers](#)
- [OEL Voluntary Preschool Program \(VPK\)](#)
- [OEL School Readiness](#)

Invest Early in Itasca, Minnesota

- [Invest Early Overview](#)

Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ) in Minneapolis, Minnesota

- [NAZ Overview](#)
- [NAZ - Who We Are](#)
- [NAZ - What We Do](#)
- [NAZ - Why We Exist](#)
- [NAZ - How We're Doing](#)

Pre4Cle in Cuyahoga County, Ohio

- [Pre4Cle Overview](#)

Smart Start in North Carolina

- [Smart Start Overview](#)