JANUARY 2025

Oregon Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Research Study

Prepared by:
The Research Justice Institute
At the Coalition of Communities of Color

Coalition of Communities of Color

Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care

Table of Contents

Table of Contents (cont.)

Figures and Tables

Acknowledgments

The Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC) would like to thank all the early childhood educators, their professional supporters, and other early learning experts who shared their time, truths, and desires for stronger approaches to keeping children in care settings over the last two years. It was a great honor to spend so much time with and hearing from over 400 adults in our state who deeply care for children and work tirelessly to see their development and success. We hope you all see yourselves, your realities, and your approaches throughout these pages and that the State will thoroughly and thoughtfully advance the recommendations.

CCC thanks the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) for choosing us to take on this task and providing so much time, support, and collaboration to help us understand the early learning landscape and the universe of early childhood educators and centers throughout the state. The trust and confidence in CCC was deeply felt and appreciated as we led this research from a grounded community-centered perspective.

We would like to thank AB Cultural Drivers and the Oregon Infant and Mental Health Association for their behind the scenes support in developing our statewide approach and gaps in knowledge about early childhood educator needs and realities. We are also indebted to the Regional Service Providers, Educational Services Districts, Early Learning and Care Departments, and Child Care Resource and Referral leaders from across the state who helped us understand their regional strengths and challenges, hosting us at different meetings and all-day visits, and collaborating with us to conduct online focus groups with early educators in their networks. Thanks to Veronica Bunelos and Jonny Badillo for helping us conduct focus groups in Spanish. Special shout out to the Language Focus Leads who offered their time and expertise in hosting focus groups with their communities and expressed overall candor about the lack of resources and support in languages other than English. Learning about the strengths and care of your communities was humbling and helped us think about the centrality of care in avoiding suspension and expulsion.
Lastly, we would like to thank both the Every Child Belongs (ECB) Advisory Committee, comprised of families, early childhood educators and early educators, and other professionals from the early learning system, and the union representing licensed family early childhood educators, and the Oregon Social Learning Center for helping us understand the large pulse of issues and needs for early childhood educators from across the state and with their development of the interview and focus group protocols we utilized for this study.

Funding: This publication was made possible from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and by general funding from Oregon's Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of DHHS, ACF, or DELC.

Recommended Citation: Coalition of Communities of Color. (2025). "Oregon Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program Study." Portland, Oregon: Coalition of Communities of Color.

Executive Summary

In July 2021, the Oregon legislature established the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program (ECSEPP) and a prohibition on the use of suspension and expulsion, going into effect on July 1, 2026, as promulgated in House Bill 2166 ("HB2166") and Senate Bill 236 ("SB236"). The purposes of the ECSEPP are to: reduce the use of suspension, expulsion, and other forms of exclusionary discipline in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and child care programs; and reduce disparities in the use of suspension, expulsion, and other forms of exclusionary practices in ECE and child care programs based on race, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, or any other protected class.

In June 2023, the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) commissioned the Coalition of Communities of Color to design and conduct a research study on suspension and expulsion in Oregon's early learning and care environments, focusing on ways to reduce the use of those practices. The research included a secondary data collection of published data on the subject and two primary data collection efforts: 1) a resource mapping survey on early childhood educator's reactions to ECE resources, and 2) qualitative findings on educators experiences and desires about what will help them to prevent suspension and expulsion. Summaries of each and the study's overall recommendations are included below. DELC's response letter in chapter six provides an agency/system level response and context review.

Suspension and Expulsion in Oregon:

- Oregon families reported that in 2020, 6.3% of all children were suspended or expelled and in 2022, it increased to 9.1% of all children (2016 national survey reported 2.2%)
- Rates of S&E in 2022 by race/ethnicity: 17.2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 16.1% African American/Black, 10.6% American Indian/Alaskan Native, 10.3% Latine, 7.7% white
- Rates of S&E in 2022 by language; 20% Mandarin, 15% Vietnamese, 12% Spanish, 8% English
- Rates of S&E in 2022 by disability: 22.1% with individualized family service plan (IFSP), disability, medical need; 7.1% without IFSP (2016 national survey reported 5.4%)
- Provider types more likely to S&E: community-based center, 25.6%; child care co-located in K-12 schools, 25.1%; urban, 21.2%
- Provider types less likely to S&E: family or home based child care; 10.1% urban 14% rural

Reactions to available and used Resources (Survey):

- This survey provided a high-level overview of the existing resources available to early childhood educators across different child care programs in the state of Oregon. These resources represent those funded by local, state and federal systems.
- Educators reported accessing a variety of different resources across different programs.
- Educators generally reported higher levels of satisfaction with the resources they accessed, however, they also shared opportunities for improvements. Suggested improvements were resource specific. Practical skills sharing and education, especially those that increase accessibility and inclusion in the classroom

Desired supports to prevent suspension and expulsions (Interviews/Focus Groups):

- Interviews and focus groups with early childhood educators identified strategies of supporting educators and better allow them to keep children in care settings. They also identified provider perceived "gaps in support" that

if addressed would allow educators to better focus on children and families.

- Early educators described the importance of establishing a relationship with a child first, as central to the profession of child care. A Child First Care approach is considered essential to all other strategies that support educators, children and families.
- The majority of the early educators identified strategies that were centered around interpersonal relationships (i.e., early educator and -child, -family, -early educator, -specialist).
- Early educators described their experiences engaging with dominant systems, which represent agencies at local, state and federal levels. A few early educators we heard from offered high praise for local and state level support, while the majority referenced often feeling uninformed, overburdened, and unsupported.

Recommendations of early educators:

- Regional focus and regional leader control to prevent suspension and expulsion
- One-on-one support and opportunities for follow-up and feedback from educators
- Responsive and accountable systems that are well coordinated through systems, follow up, and communications around resources
- Short term recommendations
    - Communication and guidance about the prohibition
    - Regional collaboration
    - Child care-centered trainings
    - Audit of administrative systems
- Long term recommendations
    - Connecting Peers
    - Accessible Resources
    - Family Supports
    - Workplace Supports
    - Business Development Supports

1

Introduction

In July 2021, the Oregon legislature established the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program (ECSEPP) as promulgated in House Bill 2166 ("HB2166")[1] and Senate Bill 236 ("SB236").[2] The purposes of the ECSEPP are to: reduce the use of suspension, expulsion, and other forms of exclusionary discipline in Early Childhood Education (ECE) and education programs; and reduce disparities in the use of suspension, expulsion, and other forms of exclusionary practices in ECE and education programs based on race, ethnicity, language, ability, gender, or any other protected class. The bills passed also establish a prohibition on the use of suspension and expulsion. The prohibition goes into effect on July 1, 2026. It states that any early learning and care program receiving money from the DELC (formerly the Early Learning Division of the Oregon Department of Education) or any registered or certified early learning and care program "may not suspend or expel any child."

Exclusionary discipline can look like:

Exclusionary practices: any action taken by an early care and education program that limits the enrollment, participation, or attendance of a child due to the child's ability, needs, or behavior.

Expulsion: permanently dismissing a child from their early care and education program.

Suspension: temporarily dismissing a young child from the early care and education environment, either through in-program suspension or out-of-program suspension:

> "In-program suspension" means temporarily prohibiting the child from engaging in the classroom or group setting by sending the child to a different location within the program or building. In-program suspension does not include a supported break.
>
> "Out-of-program suspension" means dismissing or sending the child home early, prohibiting them from returning to the program for one or more days, or otherwise reducing the hours the child spends per week in the program.

With these changes on the horizon, in June 2023, DELC commissioned us, researchers at the Research Justice Institute (RJI) of the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC), to design and conduct a research study on suspension and expulsion in Oregon's early learning and care environments, focusing on ways to reduce the use of those practices. This commissioned work serves as the research study required by Senate Bill 236 (2021) and House Bill 2166 (2021).

A 2022 survey conducted by DELC found that over 9% of all families with a child under the age of five who responded to the survey (n=3,705) had a child either suspended or expelled from a child care program. That same year, another survey conducted by DELC that focused on ECE directors and owners' experience with use of suspension and expulsions found that nearly 1 in 5 or 19.3% (n=2,166) of early educators who completed the survey reported having asked a child in their program to leave or take a break in the last year. This confirms a disturbing trend. Since at least 2019 there has been an increase of children between the ages six weeks to five years being removed from child care. And the rates of suspension and expulsion for Black and African American children and children with disabilities is particularly high – 16.1% and 22.1%, respectively (see more details about these studies and more in chapter three).[3] Not only do children lose important learning experiences at a formative time in their lives and are often labeled as bad or challenging, but families also experience significant impacts such as economic instability often due to job losses.

This research seeks to address these issues by providing early childhood educator voice and feedback about what is needed to prevent suspension and expulsion in Oregon. It details what approaches child care early educators rely on to keep children with diverse needs, abilities, and identities in their early learning and care programs as well as how they engage with families.

The report consists of five main chapters:

Methodology – covers our approach to examining

suspension and expulsion, the methods used for data collection, and explanation of our confidence in presented data

Suspension and Expulsion in Oregon – provides a population level data overview of suspension and expulsion in Oregon and what the already published data tells us about how to prevent suspension and expulsion

Resource Mapping Survey – explains the survey methods, data preparation, who took the survey, and the findings of the survey

Relational Approaches to Prevention – lays out a core approach to preventing suspension and expulsion, Child First Care, and follows with five different modalities of support based on relationships and desired needs of child care early educators – early educator-child, -families, -early educator, -specialist, -dominant

Recommendations from Early Educators – details the various overarching recommendations developed by the researchers based off the data collected and presented in this study

2

Methodology

A methodology details the design of a research study. It covers the reasoning and actions taken to understand the social phenomena. This study seeks to understand why, how, by whom, and where suspension and expulsion happen and what supports and approaches can help early educators eliminate this practice. The study design is explained in this chapter via three sections: 1) our approach to the study, 2) the methods we chose and used, and 3) our confidence about the evidence we collected.

2.1 Our Approach to Examining Suspension and Expulsion

Before we discuss the three key approaches that informed this study – research equity, diversity of data, and multi-methods – we begin with a researcher positionality statement, which means clearly stating how our professional and personal lived experiences contribute to and shape how we approach research broadly and this study specifically.

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), queer, and community-centered – we are researchers with advanced degrees from dominant institutions that are expertly trained in social sciences and humanities. Yet, our research and data collection styles are grounded in non-dominant approaches. As people of color, we always consider the ways non-white groups are decentered, othered, and erased, and therefore, often have perspectives and approaches that vary from the dominant. As queer folks, we see clear divisions between dominant and status quo approaches to those that are more justice focused and tend to be more inclusive, affirming, and approachable for all. Lastly, as community researchers, we believe the most important perspectives for any decision-making lie within those with the most direct lived experience of the issue at hand. These three perspectives impact who we talk to, what we ask, and most importantly, our understanding of how power is situated in our research topic. Further, the focus is directly on child care early educators' experiences and desires. It requires an intentional, flexible, and approachable research design and process to meet folks where they are and in ways that feel good for them.

We move on to discuss the three core approaches that informed this study: research equity, a diversity of data, and a multi-methods approach. We discuss each of these below.

Research equity is the practice of examining issues from marginalized and most-impacted community perspectives to shift dominant systems to better serve them. For this study, our data collection efforts sought to center diverse child care early educator perspectives, ensuring that the voices of Black, Indigenous, and other early educators of color and those who don't speak English or are English language learners were well represented.

Our Base of Knowledge report – a review of research and scholarship on what is known about suspension and expulsion in Oregon (see overview in chapter three) – revealed that child care early educators, particularly early educators of color, are not centered in most research. However, despite these limitations, we did our best to ensure that secondary data collection prioritized prior studies that elevate the lived experiences of children, families, and educators who are part of and/or who serve communities of color, communities who speak languages other than English, and disability communities.

Our primary data collection focused on understanding the perspectives of early educators of color and early educators who care for children of color since children who are Black, Brown, and English language learners are disproportionately suspended or expelled in Oregon. When research represents diverse perspectives, its outcomes will challenge a "one-size-fits-all" approach to meeting their needs. Instead, research equity aims to understand how systemic barriers have differentially excluded communities from access to resources and opportunities and to inform equity-based decisions to address these systemic inequities.

The second approach to this research is relying on a ***diversity of data***. This means that we value and use data that emerges from various ways of knowing. Unlike dominant approaches to research that favor or

prioritize certain ways of knowing over others, a diversity of data approach ensures that multiple perspectives inform our understanding of social phenomena. This approach brings greater nuance, complexity, and robustness to our knowledge; it therefore increases the reliability of how we come to understand a social phenomenon (i.e., suspension and expulsion)
For this study, we relied on the collecting data about the experiences, needs, truths, and desires for the future of a range of "interested and affected groups" (IAG) who are all invested in mitigating and eventually eliminating suspension and expulsion. The IAGs whose perspective are reflected in this report and its recommendations include: child care early educators, early learning experts working at the State, Regional Service Providers, CCR&Rs, child care center owners and directors, specialists, and other experts. Together, their lived experiences constitute a diversity of data.

Lastly, we take a ***multi-methods approach*** in this study. Multi-methods means that various methods are used to investigate a phenomenon – qualitative, quantitative, spatial, etc. It allows researchers to uncover meaning from different perspectives and compare which ones overlap with each other. This varies from mixed methods studies, which require qualitative and quantitative approaches to build off each other in specific and intentional ways. For this study, we used quantitative methods to understand a bird's eye view of resources and how early educators understand, rely, and value them. For the rest of the study we focus deeply on qualitative approaches to provide rich context and nuance about what early educators are experiencing, needing, and asking for in a desired future.

This tripartite methodological approach will expose complexities; there won't always be clear distinctions between what is the right or wrong way to address the disproportionate use of suspension and expulsion of children of color or children with disabilities. That is not the goal of this study; we are less concerned with categorical rigidity, or distilling down the data to certain calculated "truths" that are stripped of context and nuance – finding that strategy A works in facility type B located in region type C. Instead, the goal of this research is to provide a robust account of the most pressing needs in all of their varieties as expressed by early educators and articulated in their relationships with families, other early educators, specialists, and dominant systems. For example, some early educators limit their interaction with families until absolutely necessary, demonstrating a deep commitment and focus on the child. While other early educators we engaged shared extremely detailed approaches to working with families. Which approach is correct? Probably both, because what is needed for one child in one setting over another child in a different setting can vary greatly.

Rather than shying away from or not engaging with these distinctions and contradictions, this research dives into the complexity to guide us in understanding the overall approaches early educators are taking to keeping children in programs and the challenges they face. The research produces recommendations for better supporting early educators and spotlights areas and needs that were previously unknown or under-supported. We encourage decision-makers at the state level to consider how all interested and affected groups can implement these recommendations to prevent suspension and expulsion in Oregon.

2.2 Methods for Data Collection

We began the research study with a secondary data collection approach of reviewing current literature and data on suspension and expulsion. We provided DELC a "Baseline of Knowledge" report about suspension and expulsion in Oregon.[4] We focused on programs and services for children ages 0-5, the early educators providing the programs and services, and the children and families being served. When possible, we contextualize the information with data and research from other states and at the national level. In the synthesis, we aim to address the following three key questions:

1. Who does or does not use exclusionary practices in Oregon? Why or why not?
2. Who in Oregon is or is not suspended or expelled? Why or why not?
3. How can Oregon's early learning and care system better support early educators, families, and young

children, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the use of exclusionary discipline practices?

The findings from the Baseline of Knowledge report helped us understand, to some extent, what wasn't working for child care early educators, and we got a lot of feedback and validation from ECE experts across the state about the findings of the report. Specifically, we asked the Every Child Belongs (ECB) Advisory Committee and DELC colleagues about their reactions to the Baseline of Knowledge findings and two questions during various zoom meetings:

1. **What's working well: who, what, and how** – What policies, practices used, and resources help to keep children in programs
2. **What do you fear? What are you excited about?** – What is important to know as we engage early educators about the prohibition? What details do you want to help better support early educators and improve our ECE systems?

Over the course of a few months, we received feedback, reviewed it, added more ideas, and shared back the results. These feedback were key to guiding us towards our primary data collection efforts. Namely, we understood that we lacked a great deal of information on *what was working* or *what exactly is needed* to keep children in care settings. These questions would be best answered by the four primary data collection methods used in the study: 1) resource mapping survey, 2) one-on-one interviews, 3) focus groups, and 4) field notes.

Resource Mapping Survey – the first data collection method intended to provide a statewide picture of resources available to early learning and care professionals to prevent and reduce suspension and expulsion. This survey (n=328) was co-constructed with DELC. The goal was to understand which resources early educators had heard about, what they relied on most, and their assessment of the value of each resource they used. DELC helped identify the resources that child care early educators could access. CCC researchers also included six qualitative questions:

1. How did you approach this problem in the past?
2. If you had all the resources available to you, how would you approach or address the problem?
3. What support would you need to guide you?
4. Describe any other supports you desire to help prevent suspending or expelling that you haven't already shared about.
5. If you had access to the support and technical assistance you needed, what would you do with the time and capacity that would provide?
6. Is there anything else you wish to share about the resources or technical assistance you have received in the past or wish to receive in the future?

These questions allowed early educators from across the state to give us more details about their experiences with suspension and expulsion and desired support. The survey tool was shared with the union representing licensed family child care early educators. We discuss the survey findings in Chapter Four.

Interviews and Focus Groups – the second and third data collection method was chosen by the researchers to address the following research questions: What approaches work to prevent suspension and expulsion? What is needed to avoid the suspension and expulsion of children in various settings across the state? These qualitative data collection tools help to provide more in-depth, nuanced perspectives and reveal the desires of individuals and groups of folks with key lived experiences (i.e., child care early educators).

We used a semi-structured interview 45-60 minutes) and focus group (90-120 minutes) approach. This means that we asked all participants a set of pre-determined questions with some minimal flexibility for researchers to explore particular themes. This approach is important because it keeps the focus of the analysis on the predetermined areas of concern. In contrast, unstructured interviews have a lot more flexibility for participants to take the interview or focus group whenever they would like. Each approach has strengths and challenges, but for the sake of this study, we wanted to be sure to stay focused on the areas that mattered most as inferred by DELC, ECB Advisory Committee, composed of parent, child care early educators and early educators, and other professionals from the early learning system we engaged in the interview/focus group protocol process. See Appendix A for more information about the interview

and focus group protocols.

Field Notes – the final data collection method came out countless discussions, meetings, and site visits with early learning experts from across the state. Field notes are a common qualitative data collection method for capturing real-time data via factual descriptions about settings, actions, behaviors, reactions, and conversations. It's also a place for researchers to track their reflections and interpretations on what happened or was said during a meeting or visit. Lastly, field notes can be very helpful to note the strengths and challenges of a research method, like when a question results in lots of good information or when it does not; these observation can help inform slight changes of how, what, and when things are asked. For this study, field notes were primarily used to capture the experiences and desires of Regional Service Providers and early educators in their regions during meetings and visits and as reminders to researchers about "ah-ha moments" and other important connections made by early educators that became apparent during data collection.

Ultimately, all of the methods of data collection detailed above were in the services of understanding two main areas:

1. **What is working well?** What are the resources and strategies that early educators in Oregon access to build relationships with children and families and to keep children with diverse needs, abilities, and identities in their early learning and care programs. What are the resources and strategies that families use to advocate for their children and to connect with their early educators.
2. **How can what is working well inform the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program?** What can and should DELC do to promote and expand the strategies and resources that are currently working to reduce the use of suspension and expulsion in early learning and care settings.

2.3 Confidence in Presented Evidence

It is important to begin by saying that we collected a PhD level amount of data for this project for a very hard-to-reach population – child care early educators. In other words, there is enough data here to write a dissertation level study. And since the majority of this study is based on qualitative methods, it takes a considerable amount of time to collect and analyze these data. Further, we experienced the most no-shows, cancelations, and rescheduling than any other study we've conducted in the past five years. We do not blame child care early educators; in fact, these low response rates are important data in themselves. It points to the extremely demanding work conditions that child care early educators experience. They are very busy people, many of them business owners, with multiple responsibilities beginning early morning into the evening. Early educators are exhausted, underpaid, and overworked, which means little time left over in a day to offer researchers time to talk for an hour or attend two hour focus groups. Despite these realities, we are proud of the number of early educators we were able to engage and the quality of data we collected from them. In this section, we detail 1) the value of qualitative data, 2) the steps we took in analyzing these data, and 3) how we assess validity, trustworthiness, and representativeness of our study sample. We end by presenting the demographics and a map of the study's participants.

The ***value of qualitative data*** (words) is its capacity to give us a fuller understanding of any social phenomena, typically grounded in the lived experiences of those who are closest to it. However, the power of qualitative data is rarely harnessed by dominant institutions in decision-making. Instead, quantitative data are overwhelmingly relied on and believed to be the most reliable and trustworthy for decision-making. Yet, relying only on quantitative data alone is insufficient because it paints a partial picture, often a point in time, of an issue. With surveys being the primary method for collecting quantitative data, population sampling approaches often lead to uncertainty about the extent to which respondents have lived experience in what they are being asked about.

Furthermore, quantitative approaches rely on comparing groups to make claims about them, which often perpetuates harmful narratives of deficit and represents people's experiences of the world in terms

of disparities. Quantitative data is good at generalizing certain understandings over a large population. However, it rarely offers actionable solutions grounded in contextually specific lived experiences.

On the other hand, any systematically collected information presented as words, stories, narratives, art, or sounds gives rich insight into an issue that is complex and is strongest when it offers action steps towards an issue from the perspective of those most impacted. Furthermore, qualitative data generates insights into the desires of people and communities, which can facilitate decision-making based on strengths rather than deficits. Quantitative data gives us a bird's-eye view of a problem or issue, and qualitative data gives us more details about it and a pathway for solutions grounded in lived experiences. Yet, because of the persistent devaluation and dismissal of qualitative data as not representative or unreliable, it is rarely considered for decision-making. Next, we describe the steps we took in our qualitative data analysis and share how we assess the strength of these data.

We took three steps of ***qualitative data analysis*** in this study. Four researchers coded individually and collectively across all three steps: 1) initial coding, 2) focused coding, and 3) axial coding. We provide details of each step below.

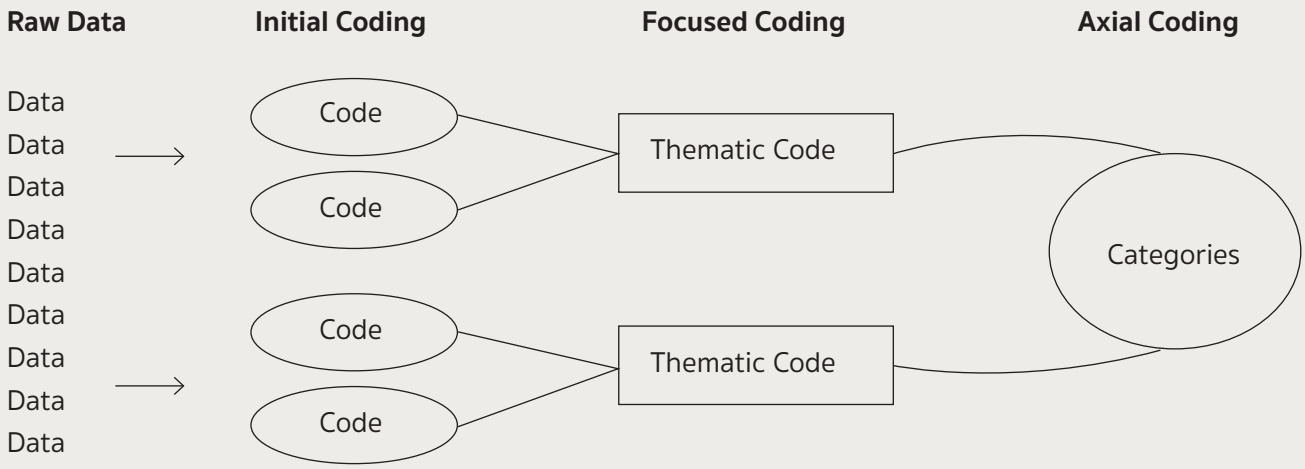
Initial coding – Researchers assigned codes to the comments made by study participants. These codes sought to explain the meaning of what participants shared. With a semi-structured interview process, we already knew the main areas of interest as detailed by previous research and other early learning experts consulted during the interview protocol creation (see list of areas of interest below). With already identified areas of inquiry, this approach makes the coding process more straightforward: we code the responses per question so that we can aggregate codes that demonstrate patterns. For example, one pattern that emerged from responses was around the desires for professional training. This pattern came from our initial codes on understanding inclusion, identifying autism, neurodivergent approaches, trauma-informed approaches, administering medicine, appropriate restraint methods, business development, grant writing, etc. These initial codes allow the researcher to begin categorizing what kind of training is desired. During this step, we also selected quotes from the texts that represented various initial codes well. Once we had a series of initial codes and meaningful quotes for each area, we moved on to focused coding.

Focused coding – In this step of the analysis, the four researchers from the initial coding process were assigned different areas of interest (see Figure 1). They reviewed the initial codes and quotes assigned to those areas and began focus coding. Here, focus coding means aggregating initial codes to establish new codes about the various approaches in those areas. So the list of desired training as identified in the initial coding is now grouped together and are assigned new labels to better understand training needs. For example, instead of a long listicle of different training, we have meaningful groups such as prevention, addressing big behaviors, building a responsive environment, to name a few. Once all initial codes are grouped and assigned focused codes and quotes that help detail them, we move onto axial coding.

Areas of interest:

1. Approaches to suspension and expulsion (Intake procedures, evaluations, seeking support; Infants vs toddlers; Working with families)
2. Capacity building (desired formal and informal supports)
3. Ideal specialist support (what do good experiences and relationships look like?)
4. Ways to minimize administrative burden (less paperwork, visits, renewal periods)
5. Concerns around the ban (what do you need before this happens?)

Figure 1. Visualizing the coding process

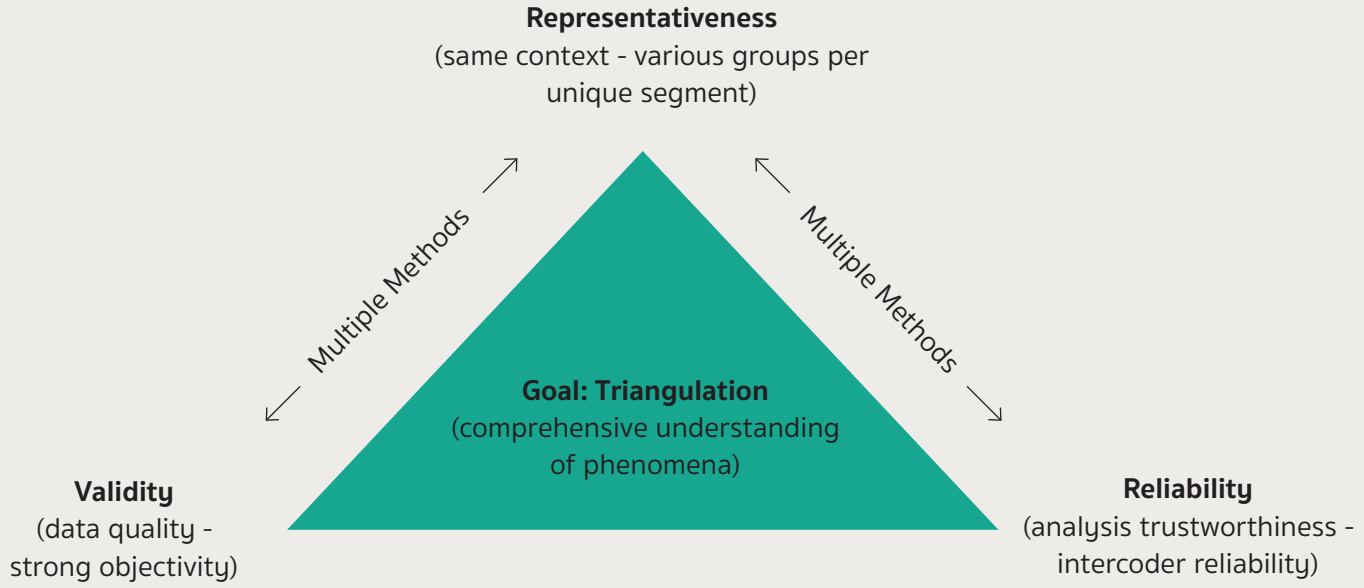


Axial coding – In the final step of analysis, coders review all of the focused codes and quotes. This review could lead to removing or regrouping redundant codes, relabeling focused code when appropriate, and combining codes that make sense together instead of on their own to establish a new larger code. The string of focused codes on training are now grouped into larger axial codes that are more meaningful. For example, we can now say that educators desired child-care centered training and professional business training, keeping the focused codes as descriptions of the larger axial codes.

The coding process is a generative one; it encourages the analyst to ascribe more meaningful labels as patterns begin to emerge (see Figure 1). In this study the axial codes are called elements, focused codes are called approaches, and the selected examples for each approach were often initial codes – you can see this in the summary tables at the end of each section in chapter five.

Next, we share how we make sense of the ***validity, trustworthiness, and representativeness*** of our study sample.

Figure 2. Triangulation and Assessing the Strengths of Qualitative Research



The value and rigor of qualitative data and its analysis should not be assessed in the same ways as quantitative data. However, qualitative scholars, including the authors of this study, have detailed ways that we can think of validity, trustworthiness, and representativeness – approaches for ensuring confidence in the findings of quantitative studies – in qualitative studies (see figure 2 on previous page).

The goal of assessing qualitative research relies on triangulation. ***Triangulation*** refers to a method used to increase the validity and credibility of research findings through multiple methods, theories, and observers. We've detailed above how theory (our approach) and methods influenced our analysis. We explain how validity, reliability, and representativeness each play a role in triangulation. We detail each below and how they were applied in this study.

Validity, or data quality, relies on where the data comes from and how researchers treat it throughout the analysis process. First, the data in this study comes from child care early educators, those most closely connected to children who are suspended and expelled and impacted by Oregon's upcoming prohibition on suspension and expulsion. The analysis relies on the standpoints or perspectives of those with lived experiences, which gets researchers closer to a stronger, more valid interpretation and representation of reality. Second, the researchers must lean into their subjectivities throughout the engagement with these data and acknowledge where their positive and negative biases show up and influence the analysis. Unlike quantitative approaches, which seek to remove bias, which is impossible since every construct or analysis by humans is biased. Qualitative data analysis requires one to own those biases and note how they impacted the study. Feminist scholar, Sandra Harding, calls this "Strong objectivity" in qualitative data, in contrast to supposedly value-neutral research, or "weak objectivity" of quantitative approaches. Harding suggests researcher reflexivity or consideration of the researcher's positionality and how that affects their research (i.e., bias) as a "stronger" objectivity than researchers claiming to be completely neutral. Knowledge and the biases affecting it must be equally judged by the scientific community and located in social history.[5] In short, acknowledging how bias shows up and affects a research process and analysis ensures stronger objectivity, or validity, than denying or suggesting the removal of bias, which is a much more "weak objective."

Biases are not necessarily bad:

- **Positive biases** – when analysts acknowledge that they are interpreting data from the complexities and multiple standpoints of their own lived experiences and biographies
- **Negative biases** – introduced to data analysis when there is no transparency about the influences that analysts bring to their interpretation, or how research was designed or data collected

Reliability, or trustworthiness, relies on having multiple observers and coders throughout the data collection and analysis process to ensure an intercoder/observer reliability. We had four researchers across four approaches collecting and analyzing data in this study. Each researcher used memos, and there were multiple rounds of coding and discussion to ensure the reliability of the analysis. Memos are a way for researchers to document their coding schema and why they chose it, emerging patterns they notice while coding, questions that come up while coding, and any other reflections or observations that come up while coding, along with how one's positive or negative bias are showing up in the process. As detailed above, multiple coding steps allow for discussion about why certain codes were made, how they vary by the researcher, and to reach an agreement about what all researchers believe the data is and is not saying. Memos and multiple coding steps allow for intercoder reliability, which assesses agreement, disagreement, and consensus in the coding process.

Representativeness in qualitative research depends on the various groups per unique segment that can detail a specific context. For this study, we wanted to understand 0-5 suspension and expulsion and how to prevent it, so we needed various groups of folks from different perspectives who could provide that context well. As noted above, we relied on a diversity of data from multiple groups, and we heard from enough people to research saturation. In qualitative research, saturation is achieved when no new themes or insights emerge, signaling that the phenomenon under study has been explored and conclusions can be made without collecting further data. The data is saturated with the majority of relevant information. Every qualitative study should demonstrate how they know they reached saturation. Further, saturation is even more meaningful when the sample represents those who can detail this context well. We knew we reached saturation when it didn't matter if we spoke with a Black at-home early educator in Portland, a Spanish-speaking school-based center early educator in Ontario, or a white for-profit service early educator in Eugene. We continued to hear the same themes, securing more details but no new insights. Reaching saturation across various groups per unique segment ensures confidence in representativeness.

The **participants in this study** came from all over the state of Oregon (see Table 1), and we are confident that our study represented educators from different regions, racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds, and facility types.

Table 1. Demographic table of participations (Total Sample Size = 471)

Data Collection	n	%
Interview participants	44	9.3
Focus group participants	99	21.0
Survey participants	328	69.6

Racial Demographics	n	%
American Indian, Alaskan Native, or First Nation Canadian	41	8.4
Asian American	26	5.3
Black or African, including North African and Afro-Caribbean	94	19.3
Eastern European	14	2.9
Latine	116	23.8
Middle Eastern or Arab American	10	2.1
Mixed race	3	0.6
Other	1	0.4
Pacific Islander	3	0.6
White	141	29.0
Missing data: race	38	7.8

Region Demographics	n	%
Urban	374	79.4
Rual	88	18.7
Missing data: region	9	1.9

3

Suspension and Expulsion in Oregon

This section focuses on providing an overview of what is known about suspension and expulsion in Oregon at the time we conducted this study. It is meant to help the reader understand from a population level perspective what has been previously studied and to document what leaders from across the state impressed upon us as key issues, needs, and desires to better support child care early educators and the children in their care. The first section of this chapter abbreviates an earlier "Baseline of Knowledge Study" about suspension and expulsion in Oregon's early learning and care system that was completed in 2023 (the full report can be found in Appendix B). The second section provides an overview of changes from what is presented first, based on recently released research since the initial report was written. We lay out the findings in three areas: 1) Population Level Data about Suspension and Expulsion, 2) Reseason for Suspension and Expulsion, and 3) Preventing Suspension and Expulsion.

3.1 Population Level Data about Suspension and Expulsion

Nearly 600,000 children under age 13 live in Oregon, and more than one-third of these children are under age 5.[6] In most (over 60%) one- or two-parent households with children under age 6, the single parent or both parents are employed,[7] meaning that these households require non-parental child care for their young children. In Oregon, non-parental early care and education is available across multiple settings, including friend, family, and neighbor care (FFN), family- or home-based programs, center-based programs, including Head Start centers, community-based organizations, and public schools.[8]

Too often, system leaders, early educators, families, and even children themselves incorrectly believe that the core issue underlying suspension and expulsion is children who are "bad", that children in marginalized communities are particularly "bad", and that "fixing" these "bad" children is the needed solution. These beliefs reflect a deficits-based view of children and families. This view is incorrect, because the **root causes of inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion are systemic**,[9] including early educators' implicit and explicit bias, lack of knowledge about how to provide "support for social-emotional well- being at the individual child, family, classroom, and program level", and insufficient understanding of children's development. Requiring a strengths-based approach that centers racial equity and encourages trauma-informed practices will help DELC to create and expand resources for early educators, to address the real root causes of inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion. This approach will result in a truly transformative ECSEPP.

We answer two questions in this section:

1. Who does or does not use exclusionary practices in Oregon? Why or why not?
2. Who in Oregon is or is not suspended or expelled? Why or why not?

The section ends with updated data from Oregon's 2023 Childhood Care Educator Survey and reflections on the data shifts since the release of our "Baseline of Knowledge" study.

Who does or does not use exclusionary practices in Oregon? Why or why not?

Early learning and care educators in Oregon provided direct information about their use of suspension and expulsion in a recent statewide survey. In 2022, nearly 1 in 5 early educators reported having asked a child in their program to leave or take a break in the last year (19.3% of the 2,166 early educators who completed the survey).[10] For comparison, in a 2006 study of early educators in Massachusetts, researchers discovered that 39.3% reported expelling and 14.7% reported suspending at least one child in the last year.[11] In another 2006 study focused solely on expulsion, researchers found that 10% of teachers from prekindergarten programs across 40 states reported expelling at least one child in the last year. When these researchers focused on Oregon, they found that 10.94% of teachers expelled at least one child in the last year. In a recent review of research on suspen-

sion and expulsion in early learning and care, researchers report that "[a]cross studies, between 9.0% and 39.3% of teachers or programs had used exclusionary discipline, indicating that this is common across care settings."[12] Thus, compared to other states, Oregon is currently in the middle of the reported range across the country.

Many factors relate to why an early educator may ask a child to leave or take a break from their early learning and care environment. Here, we discuss several factors that recent research has explored.

To gain insight into who does and does not use exclusionary practices in Oregon, the researchers who conducted the recent statewide survey examined early educators' responses, separately based on facility type, geographical location of their programs, and whether the programs have state-funded slots.[13] We report these disaggregated data in Table 2. In the columns, we sort these data by whether the values are higher or lower than the percentage reported across all early educators who responded to the survey (19.3%; we refer to this as the "overall rate").* If the percentage in Table 2 is higher than 19.3%, then it means early educators in these settings were more likely to ask a child to leave or take a break compared to the overall rate. Conversely, if the percentage is lower than 19.3%, then it means early educators in these settings were less likely to ask a child to leave or take a break compared to the overall rate.

Table 2. Oregon state-wide table showing the likelihood of child educators who asked a child to leave or take a break in 2021.

	More Likely to Ask Children to Leave or Take a Break Compared to Overall Rate	Less Likely to Ask Children to Leave or Take a Break Compared to Overall Rate
Facility Type	Community-based center (not HS) (25.6%) Child care co-located in K-12 school (25.1%)	Family- or home-based child care (10.1%)
Geographic Location	Urban (21.2%)	Rual (14.0%)
State-Funded Pre-K Slots	No state-funded pre-k slots (21.1%)	n/a

Note: We report percentages that were 5% ore more above or below the overall rate of 19.3%. These findings are descriptive; we did not conduct statistic tests to determine if these values are significantly different.

The early educators who reported that they had asked a child to leave or take a break in the last year also provided information about why they did so. These early educators most commonly endorsed two reasons for asking children to leave or to take a break related to children's behavior (see Table 3): not being able to meet children's need for behavioral support (84.0%) and children's behavior being potentially dangerous to other children (73.7%).

However, when the researchers examined the reasons by facility type, geographic location, and if the program has state-funded pre-k slots, they discovered clear differences in the most common reasons for asking children to leave or take a break.[14] We report these disaggregated data in Table 3. In the columns, we sort these data by whether the values are higher or lower than the percentage reported across all of the early educators who selected that reason (i.e., the "overall rate").** For example, let's focus on the first value in each column of the first row of Table 3. Of the early educators working in community-based centers who reported asking a child to leave or

take a break, 91.7% endorsed not being able to meet the child's need for behavioral support as the reason why, which is higher than the overall rate of 84.0%. In contrast, of the early educators working in Head Start centers who reported asking a child to leave or take a break, 71.8% selected not being able to meet the child's need for behavioral support as the reason why, which is lower than the overall rate of 84.0%.

Table 3. Oregon state-wide table showing the reasons why early educators removed or asked children to take a break in 2021.

Reason	Overall Rate	More Likely to Endorse Compared to Overall Rate	Less Likely to Endorse Compared to Overall Rate
"Not able to meet child's need for behavioral support"	84.0%	Community-based center (not HS) (97.1%)	Head Start (71.8%) Oregon Prenatal to K. (72.6%) Preschool Promise (72.7%) Rual (76.1%) Family- or home-based child care (79.6%)
"Child's behavior was potentially dangerous to other children"	73.7%	Community-based center (not HS) (81.9%)	Preschool Promise (60.6%) Family or home-based child care (61.5%) Early Interv./EC Sp. Edu. (63.6%) OR Prenatal to K (67.7%)
"Program hours did not match the family's needs"	31.0%	Head Start (50.0%) OR Prenatal to K. (48.4%) Early Interv./EC Sp. Edu. (36.4%)	Child care co-located in K-12 sch. (18.2%) Family- or home-based child care (20.4%)
"Family was no longer able to pay for care"	23.9%	Community-based center (not HS) (30.1%) Family- or home-based child care (28.6%)	Head Start (9.0%) OR Prenatal to K. (4.8%) Preschool Promise (12.1%)
"Child was placed in a special education classroom"	18.9%	OR Prental to K. (38.7%) Head Start (38.5%) Preschool Promise (24.2%)	Family- or home-based child care (8.2%) Early Interv./EC Sp. Edu. (9.1%)
"Not able to meet the child's physical needs"	18.4%	Head Start (23.1%)	Preschool Promise (3.05%) Family or home-based child care (10.2%) Rual (11.3%)
"Not able to meed the child's medical needs"	8.8%	Head Start (12.8%)	Preschool Promise (3.0%) Child care co-located in K-12 sch. (3.6%)

***Note: We report percentages that were 5% ore more above or below the overall rate of 19.3%. These findings are descriptive; we did not conduct statistic tests to determine if these values are significantly different.*

Who in Oregon is or is not suspended or expelled? Why or why not?

In 2022, of the 3,705 Oregon families with young children who responded to a statewide survey about their early learning and care experiences, nearly 1 in 10 families (9.1%) reported that their child was asked to leave or to take a break, either permanently (expulsion) or temporarily (suspension), from their child care setting in the last year.[15] This reflects an increase from 2020, when 6.3% of families reported that their children were *ever* asked to leave or

to take a break.[16] As one point of comparison, in the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health, 2.2% of parents reported that their preschool-aged child had been suspended or expelled.[17]

Recent studies also clearly reveal that certain groups of Oregon children are disproportionately suspended or expelled. Table 4 shows the percentages of families – overall – who reported that their child was asked to leave or to take a break in the 2022 (9.1%)[18] and 2020 (6.3%)[19] statewide household surveys.26,27 In 2022, of the families who reported their child was asked to leave or to take a break, more families reported their child was age 3 years or older (49.1%) compared to families who reported their child was age 0-2 years (30.8%) at the time they were asked to leave (although, 20% of families declined to answer the question about their child's age at the time of being asked to leave or take a break). Table 4 also includes the percentages of families – disaggregated by children's race/ethnicity, home language, and disability status – when the disaggregated value was higher than*** the overall percentage (see Appendix B for the full set of disaggregated data by race/ethnicity, language, and disability from both surveys).

For example, in 2022, of all families with African American or Black children, 16.1% of them reported that their child was asked to leave or to take a break in the last year. In another recent study, researchers discovered *preliminary* evidence that early educators asked African American or Black children to leave more than would be expected given their proportion of the general population.[20] Together, these findings show consistency between families' and early educators' reports – that African American or Black children in Oregon disproportionately experience being suspended or expelled from their early learning and care settings.

Strikingly, in both the 2022 survey[21] and 2020 survey[22], families with children experiencing disabilities or chronic health conditions reported the highest rates of having their child be asked to leave or to take a break (22.1% and 14.7%, respectively). Alarmingly, these values are considerably higher than those reported in two studies of data from the 2016 National

Table 4. Oregon state-wide table showing the rates of being asked to leave or take a break by ethnicity

Category	2022 Household Survey	2020 Household Survey
Overall	9.1% All Children (in last year)	6.3% All Children (ever)
Race/ Ethnicity	16.1% African American / Black 17.2% Nat. Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	9.0% Amer. Indian / Alaska Native 9.5% Hispanic / Latinx
Language	20.0% Mandarin speaking 15.8% Vietnamese speaking	10.1% Spanish speaking
Disability	22.1% children with IFSPs, developmental disabilities, or medical needs	14.7% children experiencing disabilities or chronic health conditions

***Note: We report percentages that were 5% ore more above or below the overall rate of 19.3%. These findings are descriptive; we did not conduct statistic tests to determine if these values are significantly different.*

Survey of Children's Health, where 5.4% of parents reported their preschool-aged child with disabilities had been suspended or expelled,[23] compared to 2.2% of all parents in the survey sample.[24] Across multiple listening sessions, families in Oregon with children experiencing disabilities have discussed their experiences of having their children suspended or expelled.[25] In one study, families who have children experiencing disabilities "shared that they had been asked to remove their child from care due to the educator's inability to support the child's [special] needs."[26] This reason was echoed by a parents in another study,[27] one of whom shared:

> *"...It was definitely a disability thing that they were not prepared for, to handle or take care of. I say easy,*

> *we're an easy target to get rid of. We just are. It's easy to say, 'This kid can't be here. We can't handle her.' Especially when you look at the makeup of the rest of the classroom."*

These inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion – based on race/ethnicity, home language, and disabilities – emerge across multiple Oregon-based studies and over time, reflecting the degree and longevity of these issues. In prior research in other states and nationally, similar inequities have been documented – boys, African American or Black children, Hispanic or Latine children, and children experiencing disabilities are disproportionately suspended and expelled from their early learning and care settings, as well as from their kindergarten to grade 12 school environments (as synthesized in a recent review[28]).

Families connected these traits to **system-level policies, practices, and resources**, such as increasing *funding for child care facilities, providing funding to support children's and families' transitions from one child care program to another*, and *revising policies related to early educator pay and benefits to reduce turnover* in the early learning and care workforce.

When considering this set of findings, it is vital to remember – and therefore worth repeating – that **the root causes of these inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion are systemic,**[29] including implicit and explicit bias, a lack of knowledge about how to provide "support for social-emotional well-being at the individual child, family, classroom, and program level", and insufficient understanding of children's development, especially for children experiencing disabilities, developmental delays, chronic health conditions, or other medical needs. In other words, inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion do NOT result from any inherent problems with or deficits of children in specific communities. As stated in House Bill 2166 (2021),[30] Oregon's leaders who are designing and implementing the ECSEPP must prioritize changing the system in ways that will reduce and eliminate these inequities.

Updated data from Oregon's 2023 Childhood Care Educator Survey

With the recent release of Oregon's 2023 Early Childhood Care Provider Survey, we offer some updates to the data presented in our Baseline of Knowledge report and reflections on those changes. In the previous section, we outlined who does or does not use exclusionary practices, why, and who is most impacted by these practices. We update those areas below, along with some other notable findings from the survey about suspension and expulsion in Oregon, and finally offer some reflections on our experience hearing directly from early educators.

Updated: Who does or does not use exclusionary practices in Oregon?

The recent survey data affirms the baseline of knowledge in that educators in community-based centers that were not Head Start programs were the most likely facility types to ask children to leave or take a break, with an increase in the rate of suspension and expulsion from 25.6% to 31.4%. On the opposite side, family-/home-based child care sites were still less likely to leave or break with a decrease in the rate of suspension and expulsion from 10.1% to 9.1%. Similarly, urban sites were still more likely to ask a child to leave or take a break compared to rural sites. However, both urban, from 21.2% to 18%, and rural, from 14% to 11.3%, sites reported a decrease in their practices of suspense and expulsion. Lastly, there was a decrease in the rate of suspension and expulsions reported by sites with no state-funded pre-K slots from 21.1% to 16.3% and not captured previously, those sites with state-funded pre-k slots reported 11.8%, being less likely to ask children to leave or take a break than their counterparts.

Overall, 15.7% of directors and owners reported that they had asked at least one child to leave care in the past year which was a decrease to the rate reported by directors and owners in 2022 at 19.3%. While a decrease in reported exclusionary practices is a good sign, the 2022 the Childhood Care Educator Survey noted concerns with the accuracy of those reported numbers due to respondents correctly understanding

the question and unable to reliably report the information. Interpretation of these numbers should be taken with care.

Updated: Why or why not do educators use exclusionary practices in Oregon?

Data on why or why not educators use exclusionary practices also had some interesting shifts since our baseline of knowledge study. The main changes are noted below:

As noted in the Baseline of Knowledge, the top four reasons for suspension and expulsion as reported by owners and directors of child care centers and home facilities were the same and all had an increase in overall rate since 2022. Notably, "family was no longer able to pay for care" as a reason for exclusionary practices moved from fourth to third most likely reason. Lastly, there were some shifts in what care sites were more likely or less likely to endorse as the overall rate of reasons for exclusionary practices, including a few new care sites reporting the same reasoning (see below for details). Notably, family- or home-based child care sites had significant increases in the top two reasons for exclusionary practices noted below.

"Not able to meet child's need for behavioral support" from 84% to 91.2%

- More likely
  - ⬆ Increased for community-based centers (not including Head Start) from 91.7% to 93.4%
  - ⬆ Increased for rural sites from 76.1% to 92%
  - ★ New: child care co-located in K-12 school 100%
- Less likely
  - ⬆ Increased for family- or home-based child care from 79.6% to 86.8%

"Child's behavior was potentially dangerous to other children" from 73.7% to 88.5%

- More likely
  - ⬆ Increased for community-based centers (not including Head Start) from 81.9% to 91.8%
  - ★ New: child care co-located in K-12 school 90%
- Less likely
  - ⬆ Increased for Family- or home-based child care from 61.5% to 84.2%

"Family was no longer able to pay for care" from 23.9% to 42.5%

- More likely
  - ⬆ Increased for community-based centers (not including Head Start) from 30.1% to 50.8%
  - ★ New: rural sites 52%
- Less likely
  - ⬆ Increased: family- or home-based child care from 28.6% to 36.8%
  - ★ New: child care co-located in K-12 school 20.0%
  - ★ New: Urban 39.1%

"Program hours did not match family's needs" from 31% to 33.6%

- More likely
  - ★ New: community-based centers (not including Head Start) from 81.9% to 91.8%
- Less likely
  - ⬆ Increased for child care co-located in K-12 school from 18.2% to 20%
  - ⬆ Increased for family- or home-based child care from 20.4% to 28.9%

Further, the bottom three reasons for suspension and expulsions were the same and all decreased since 2022. Notably, the percentage of respondents who said the reason for suspension and expulsion was due to "not being able to meet the child's medical needs" dropped in half since 2022. Further, community-based centers (not including Head Start) were more likely to report that a "child was placed in a special education classroom" and "not able to meet the child's physical needs" as they were in 2022. Also, family- or home-based child care and rural sites were more likely to report "Unable to meet the child's medical needs" than in 2022.

"Child was placed in a special education classroom" from 18.9% to 17.7%

- More likely
  - ★ New: community-based center (not including Head Start) 21.3%
  - ★ New: child care co-located in K-12 sch. 20.0%
- Less likely
  - ⬇ Decreased for Family- or home-based child care from 8.2% to 7.9%

"Not able to meet the child's physical needs" from 18.9% to 17.7%

- More likely
  - ★ New: community-based center (not including Head Start) 24.6%
- Less likely
  - ⬆ Increased: family- or home-based child care from 10.2% to 10.5%
  - ⬆ Increased: rural from 11.3% to 12%
  - ★ New: child care co-located in K-12 sch. 10%

"Not able to meet the child's medical needs" from 8.8% to 4.4%

- More likely
  - ★ New: family- or home-based child care (10.5%)
  - ★ New: rural (16.0%)
- Less likely
  - ★ New: Community-based center (not including Head Start) (1.6%)

Updated: Who in Oregon is or is not suspended or expelled?

In the baseline of knowledge study we drew from the 2020 and 2022 Statewide Household Survey, filled out by Oregon families, to report suspension and expulsion numbers based on race/ethnicity, home languages, and disabilities (IFSP, a development disability, or chronic medical needs). Oregon's 2022 Early Childhood Care Educator Survey did not report these data due to concerns of data accuracy, but the 2023 report does offer data on race and ethnicity. Thus, we include data here focused on the percentage of all children whose race or ethnicity was reported by directors or owners, as reported in the 2023 educator survey (see Table 5 below). We do not compare the data from the household survey to the educator survey, as they are not comparable. However, when appropriate, we do note interesting differences in what parents versus educators reported on race and ethnicity.

Table 5. Percentage of all children whose race or ethnicity was reported by directors or owners (page 35)

All	Percentage of all children whose race or ethnicity was reported by directors or owners (n = 5901)	Percentage of all children reported suspended by directors or owners who consistently collected data on race or ethnicity (n = 53)
African American or Black	5.2%	9.4%
Asian	3.9%	0.0%
Hispanic or Latina/o/x	18.9%	17.0%
Middle Eastern or North African	1.4%	1.8%
Native American or Native Alaskan	4.7%	1.8%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	1.5%	0.0%
White	54.9%	64.0%
Another Identity	0.5%	3.7%
Multiracial	9.0%	1.8%

It is notable that Asian, Middle Eastern or North African, and Native American or Native Alaskan all had small or no numbers reported, where parents with children from those backgrounds certainly did report suspension or expulsion in 2022. More apparent is the zero reported suspensions for Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, whereas the parent survey reported significantly higher numbers at a disproportionate rate of their population. African American or Black were reported much higher and Hispanic or Latina/o/x were reported at a lower rate by parents in the household survey. Again, these data differences must be taken with caution since the samples, approaches, and timeframes were different and not comparable and directors and owners are not constantly collecting data on race. However, it's important that more educators continue to track race, ethnicity, language, and disabilities in standardized ways.

3.2 Preventing Suspension and Expulsion

In this section we provide an overview of what the previously collected survey data can help us understand: how can Oregon's early learning and care system better support early educators, families, and young children, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the use of exclusionary discipline practices?

Preventing suspension and expulsion: What works

- **Responsive and adaptive approaches to child care**
  - Flexible schedules
  - Using a specific framework, like the Pyramid Model
  - Willingness to provide individualized accommodations for children
- **Cultivating relationships with families**
  - Working with families to help them understand their how their emotional and social wellbeing are impacting children's
  - Helping families come to terms with their child's behavior and needs

Preventing suspension and expulsion: Educators' needs

- **Workplace and business improvements**
  - Additional staff
  - Consistent staff
  - Support with keeping staff
  - Better wages and benefits
  - Smaller class sizes
  - Marketing support to communicate with families need care and to fill empty slots
  - More intentionally designed physical spaces
  - More capacity in rural areas
- **Mental health supports for educators**
  - Tools and support to reduce stress, self care, and address depression, anxiety and burnout
  - Child care for child care educators
- **Professional development opportunities**
  - Developmentally appropriate expectations training
  - Big behaviors training
  - Training on inclusion, trauma-informed practices, and identifying and supporting children with disabilities
  - Coaching opportunities across educators in different roles, facilities, and geographic locale
  - Affordable/low-cost
- **Culturally and linguistically responsive environments**
  - Training in better supporting children's diverse cultural and linguistics needs
  - Responsive to the needs of families from multiple cultural backgrounds
  - More coaches of color and those whose primary language are other than English
- **Access to specialists**
  - More access to services to support their children's additional social, emotional, or medical needs
  - More access to Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant (MHC)

Contributions of our study

Knowing what we know from the previous studies outlined in this chapter, this study provides more information about the impact of resources, approaches to caring for children, educators' desired relational support to prevent suspension and expulsion, and recommendations for the State and other ECE professionals to implement.

In Chapter Four, resource mapping survey, we detail the extent to which early educators are and are not drawing on resources and what they thought about them. Chapter Five begins with a Child First Care model as an overall approach to prevent suspension and expulsion, as detailed by child care early educators. The remaining sections of Chapter Five look at early educators' in the context of their four most important relationships – child, families, other early educators, specialists, and dominant institutions. We provide details about how to strengthen these relationship modalities to achieve early educator's desired relational support needed from ECE supports throughout the state.

4

Resource Mapping Survey

The purpose of the Resource Mapping Survey was to collect statewide experiences of child care educators to identify which resources educators currently have access to and rely on (program definitions shown in tables 6 and 7). We were also interested in learning more about gaps in available resources, desired technical assistance, and other potentially useful resources educators require. Below, we describe the survey contents, our data collection and data cleaning methods, and our learnings.

Table 6. Early Learning & Care Programs in Oregon Included in the Survey that Serve Children 0-5

Program Name	Affiliated Agency	Program Description
Child Care Programs (general)	DELC	• This term is being used to capture any licensed child care program (including home- and center-based) that serves children 0-5.
Preschool Promise	DELC	• This program is available to families who are living at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level • They serve children ages 3-4 in settings that include licensed center-based and home-based child care and schools
Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK), Head Start, & Early Head Start	DELC & Federal Office of Head Start	• This program provides free, high-quality early care and education to families who are living at or below 100 percent of the Federal Poverty Level and families • They serves children prenatal to age 5 and provides wrap-around services that respond to a wide range of children and family needs
Baby Promise Child Care Programs	DELC	• This program offers free, high-quality infant and toddler care and education to Oregon families who are Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) eligible.
Early Head Start Child Care Partnership	Federal Office of Head Start	• This program provides early, continuous, intensive, and comprehensive child development and family support services to low-income pregnant women, infants, toddlers and their families.
School District Pre-Kindergarten	DELC, ODE, & Other	• DELC funded programs provide services in alignment with OPK and/or Preschool Promise, but in the school setting. • Non-DELC funded programs are determined at the school district level and may vary in implementation. (not all funds are from ODE) • Collectively these programs can serve children ages 3-5.

Table 7. Description of All Resources & Supports Available to Early Childhood Education Educators in the State of Oregon

Resource or Support Name	Affiliated Agency	Where its Located	Short Description/Notes
Early Intervention	Oregon Department of Education (ODE)	9 local service areas	Supports children ages birth-3 years with developmental delays or disabilities. Specialists may provide training, consultation, and coaching to early educators or child care sites based on effective strategies and supports for children 0-3 on IFSPs.
Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinators	DELC	CCR&Rs	Coordinators convene FCCN cohorts for early learning educators and leaders to focus on professional learning
Early Childhood Special Education Specialists	Oregon Department of Education (ODE)	9 local service areas	Supports children 3-5 be successful in their home, school, and community. Specialists may provide training, consultation, and coaching to sites based on effective strategies and supports for children 3-5 on IFSPs.
Early Learning Hubs	DELC	Regions	Early Learning Hubs work to create easier systems for families to navigate that increase access to high-quality early care and education opportunities.
State & Regional Inclusive Partners	DELC	State – DELC Regional – CCR&Rs	Works directly with early educators to create environments that encourage full participation for all children. May provide technical assistance, consultation, and support to educators to care for children who need additional accommodations to support inclusive care.
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants	Local and/or Federal	Various - based on regions	Consultants support the emotional and psychological well-being of children, educators, and families in early childhood settings. They address behavioral and mental health challenges, fostering healthier, more resilient communities. They are accessible through programs partnered with OPK/HS/EHS facilities.
Quality Improvement Specialists	DELC	CCR&Rs	Provide training, consultation, and technical assistance to any provider to support quality care and business practices
Infant & Toddler Specialists	DELC	CCR&Rs	Consult with early educators serving children prenatally to 3 years to meet developmentally responsive practice standards and increase the quality and availability of early care and education for infants and toddlers. May also work directly with the infant-toddler educators to increase members' skills, knowledge, and competency in providing early care and learning for children across early childhood settings.
Child Care Substitutes of Oregon	DELC	The Research Institute (TRI) at Western Oregon University	Connects trained substitutes with child care programs. Provides 50 subsidized hours of substitute time to qualifying programs per calendar year.
ORO Training Calendar	DELC	OCCD at PSU	Supports providers in accessing professional learning trainings. Allows providers to search for upcoming trainings by core knowledge category, training requirement, training set, age group, county, language, and start date.

Preschool Promise Specific Resources

Resource or Support Name	Affiliated Agency	Where its Located	Short Description/Notes
Preschool Promise Coaches	DELC	CCR&Rs	Work directly with Preschool Promise instructional staff. Provide job-embedded professional development for early educators using Practice-Based Coaching. Consult with instructional leaders to clarify program goals and support instructional leadership.
Preschool Promise Quality Specialists	DELC	CCR&Rs	Work directly with PSP Instructional Leaders. Consult with instructional leaders and program leads to support quality program practices.

Baby Promise Specific Resources

Resource or Support Name	Affiliated Agency	Where its Located	Short Description/Notes
Baby Promise Infant Toddler Specialist/Coach	DELC	CCR&Rs – only in 3 regions	Provide training and consultation to Baby Promise providers to development of skills, knowledge, and competency in providing early care and learning to infants and toddlers.

Preschool For All Specific Resources

Resource or Support Name	Affiliated Agency	Where its Located	Short Description/Notes
Preschool for All Coach	Local	Local	Available in Multnomah county only. Provides regular reflective and relationship-based coaching and professional development to teachers and instructional leaders working in early childhood programs.
Preschool for All Mental Health Consultant	Local	Local	Available in Multnomah county only. Provides consultation with educators, child mental health assessment and family-centered treatment, case management services, crisis triage, referral to community supports, and parent support and education.

OPK, HS, EHS Specific Resources

Resource or Support Name	Affiliated Agency	Where its Located	Short Description/Notes
Family Services	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Head Start families to local resources and services. Supports Head Start family well-being, safety, health, and economic stability, and child learning and development including services and supports for children with disabilities, foster parental confidence and skills that promote the early learning development of children.
Nutrition Specialist	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Ensures quality, developmentally, and culturally appropriate nutrition services for Head Start programs by providing guidance by training staff and parents and ensuring compliance with nutrition regulations.
Home Visiting Services	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Works directly with families in their homes, providing support to parents as their child's first teacher, in fostering their children's development.
Education Specialists	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	All programs provide high-quality early education and child development services, including for children with disabilities, that promote children's cognitive, social, and emotional growth for later success in school.
Family Service Navigator	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Connects Head Start families to local resources and services.
Disabilities and Inclusion Services	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Children with identified disabilities receive all applicable program services delivered in the least restrictive possible environment and that they fully participate in all program activities.
OPK/HS/EHS Mental Health Specialist	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Supports a program-wide culture that promotes mental health, social and emotional well-being, and overall health and safety, a program must use a multidisciplinary approach.
Coaches	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Work directly with OPK/Head Start instructional staff. Provide job-embedded professional development for early educators, often using practice-based coaching.
Inclusion Specialist	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Coordinates and implements the disabilities, inclusion services, and mental health component of the Head Start program to ensure compliance with standards and regulations.
Behavior Specialist	DELC &/or Federal	Regional	Supports Head Start teaching staff in addressing challenging behaviors, including facilitating behavioral interventions and implementing behavioral support plans.

School District Specific Resources

Resource or Support Name	Affiliated Agency	Where its Located	Short Description/Notes
School District Behavior Specialist	Oregon Department of Education (ODE)	School Districts	Works directly with instructional leaders to provide support with child behavior.
School District Inclusion Specialist	Oregon Department of Education (ODE)	School Districts	Works directly with instructional leaders to make accommodation and develop strategies for the inclusion of a child based on their individual needs

4.1 Methods and Data Preparation

Data collection began on August 14th, 2024, and closed on December 4th, 2024. We utilized a snowball collection method, and relying on Regional Service Providers, other early learning professionals, and child care educators to distribute the survey through email, newsletters, Facebook groups, etc. There were 329 participants in the final dataset, spanning across Oregon. The survey consisted of 18 questions, with the exact number of questions varying depending on how many resources the educators utilized in the past. Educators were asked if they had heard of the following resources:

1. Support services for child care programs
2. Baby Promise child care programs
3. Preschool Promise child care programs
4. OPK, Head Start, and Early Head Start Programs, including community resources
5. Early Head Start Child care Partnership Programs (EHS-CCP), including community resources
6. School District PreK programs

After selecting the resource types participants had existing knowledge of, educators were asked to share about which resources they utilized in the past, their level of satisfaction, and any details about their experience. In the following section, all educators were asked to share strategies to support children with big behaviors in their classrooms.

Lastly, participants were asked to provide their demographic information. Educators meeting the data cleaning requirements were given a Visa gift card of $25 as a thank you for their time. The full survey can be found in Appendix B.

Data Preparation Method

We received many duplicate and fraudulent responses due to the data distribution method. Fraudulent responses are most often responses completed by bots, which are software designed to take advantage of survey incentives. Fraudulent responses are not a unique issue to our survey, and is becoming increasingly problematic for all researchers who use online surveys and social media. Despite the challenge of fraudulent responses, there still is value in using online surveys. A major benefit of online surveys is that they are one of the best methods to access hard to reach populations– such as rural residents and BIPOC communities. We continue to improve our methods of detecting fraudulent responses to maintain the integrity of our research. For additional information about removing fraudulent responses see Appendix.

Lastly, an additional dataset from the Oregon Office of Rural Health[31] was combined with the Resource mapping data to fill in the county information and determine where responses were from rural or urban locations.

4.2 Who Took the Survey

There were 328 educators who took part in the survey. They were nearly evenly split between rural (52.5%) and (45.5%) urban locations, with the majority working in Multnomah County (16.2%), Washington County (12.5%), and Clackamas County (8%). The majority of the sample were women (64.9%) from white racial backgrounds (34.9%), but there was a substantial number of Black or African (20.6%) and Latine (17.4%) identifying educators in the sample. The full demographic table can be found in Table 8.

Table 8. Demographics

Racial Demographics	n	%
American Indian, Alaskan Native, or First Nation Canadian	36	10.5
Asian American	21	6.1
Black or African, including North African and Afro-Caribbean	71	20.6
Eastern European	13	3.8
Latine	60	17.4
Middle Eastern	8	2.3
Other	1	0.3
Pacific Islander	3	0.9
White	120	34.9
Missing data: race	11	3.2

Age Demographics	n	%
less than 30 years old	64	19.5
30 to 45 years old	185	56.4
40 to 65 years old	44	13.4
45 to 50 years old	24	7.3
greater than 50 years old	4	1.2
Missing data: age	7	2.1

Gender Demographics	n	%
Man	102	31.1
Woman	213	64.9
Missing data: gender	13	4.0

Findings

The purpose of the Resource Mapping Survey was to collect statewide experiences of child care educators to identify which resources educators currently have access to and rely on (program definitions shown in tables 6 and 7). We were also interested in learning more about gaps in available resources, desired technical assistance, and other potentially useful resources educators require. Below, we describe the survey contents, our data collection and data cleaning methods, and our learnings.

Table 9. Number and Percent of Educators who Accessed Resources by Program Type

Most heard of resource types	n	%
Preschool Promise child care programs	173	21.4
Support services for child care programs	145	17.9
OPK, Head Start, and Early Head Start programs	147	18.2
Baby Promise child care programs	131	16.2
Early Head Start Child care Partnership Programs (EHS-CCP)	115	14.2
School District PreK programs	77	9.5
Other Indirect resources	20	2.5

When averaging the scores across each resource type, educators scored them highly (see Table 10). OPK, Head Start, and Early Head Start

programs resources had the highest satisfaction rating, but were closely followed by the other resource types. This suggests that educators value many different resources across various types.

Table 10. Overall Satisfaction with Resources by Program Type

Resource Types	Means
OPK, Head Start, and Early Head Start programs	4.21
Preschool Promise child care programs	4.19
Support services for child care programs	4.18
Baby Promise child care programs	4.17
Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Programs (EHS-CCP)	4.13
School District PreK programs[a]	3.98
Other Indirect resources[a]	3.55

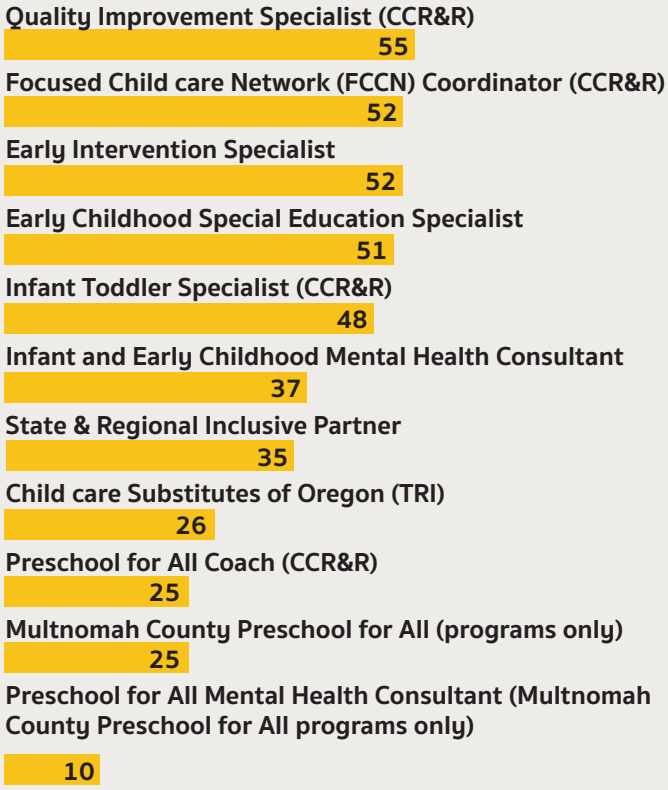
[a]*This resource type had low sample sizes, impacting the accuracy of their scores.*

Some educators included comments about their experience using the resources in each type. Overall, 986 comments were made across all resource types, which further explain the benefits and areas for improvement for each resource. In the following sections, we share more details about the most utilized and satisfactory resource for each resource type and the educator's overall sentiment regarding the resource.

4.3 Child Care Programs

Figure 3 shows the most utilized resources among child care programs. Quality improvement specialists) were both the most utilized resources and most satisfactory resource for educators (mean = 4.24). The highest rated resource for child care programs was the Early Childhood Special Education Specialist (mean = 4.40).

Figure 3. Quality Improvement Specialists were the most utilized Support Services for Child care Program



There were 138 comments made by educators about resources accessed through child care programs Support Services Programs and the overall sentiment was positive. Educators valued resources with practical advice that lead to tangible and measurable change. Educators appreciated resources that included metrics or other strategies that helped track the improvements in children's behavior and in the child care center itself. These benefits are influential to improving the quality of care provided by child care centers.

> *"What I appreciated most is that they always listened to my concerns and helped find practical solutions, whether it was adjusting the classroom environment or offering extra support for daily activities. Working with them made my center more inclusive, and every child has their own space to thrive."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review on State & Regional Inclusive Partner.*

Some resources were less accessible due to requirements and long wait times.

> *"We tried to utilize this program but were denied because we were a licensed exempt organization. I feel that this program is not inclusive nor accessible to all child care educators."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of Child Care Substitutes of Oregon (TRI).*

This prevents child care educators from benefiting from services.

Table 11. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by Child Care Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Quality Improvement Specialist (CCR&R)	4.24	Educators praised specialists for offering practical advice and training that resulted in tangible improvements. This was possible through the specialist's guidance in best practices and utilization of their performance metrics.
Infant Toddler Specialist (CCR&R)	4.23	These specialists were resourceful in fostering communication and relationships among educators, parents, and students. This resource was also beneficial in educating educators on child development and gave practical advice on creating a better learning environment. The support provided left educators feeling more confident in their work.
Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinator (CCR&R)	3.98	This resource was praised for improving the overall effectiveness of child care centers by offering peer support, sharing helpful strategies, ideas, and funding opportunities. The consistency of meetings was attributed to these positives, but they desire these events to be offered at more easily accessible places and times.
State & Regional Inclusive Partner	4.12	Educators were generally very satisfied with this resource and commended them for their wealth of knowledge in a breadth of areas. The partners were praised for offering practical solutions tailored to the educator's problems. This resulted in better strategies for tracking child improvements and communication with parents and creating more inclusive classrooms. It was mentioned that educators would benefit from more hands-on approaches to using inclusive materials and support in guiding parents through special needs resources. Educators also mentioned that although there are many specialists and consultants, the resource wait times are very long.
Early Intervention Specialist	4.27	Educators praised this resource's professionalism, ongoing check-ins, and support, especially for children with more needs. Their knowledge improved the children's experiences and helped educators implement best practices in child development.
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	4.40	Educators praised specialists for their partnership, providing resources, supporting the classroom, and broadening horizons. The only complaint was how limited the specialist's time was in the classroom, which was apparent during evaluations
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	4.39	Among the minimal comments, this resource was positive overall.

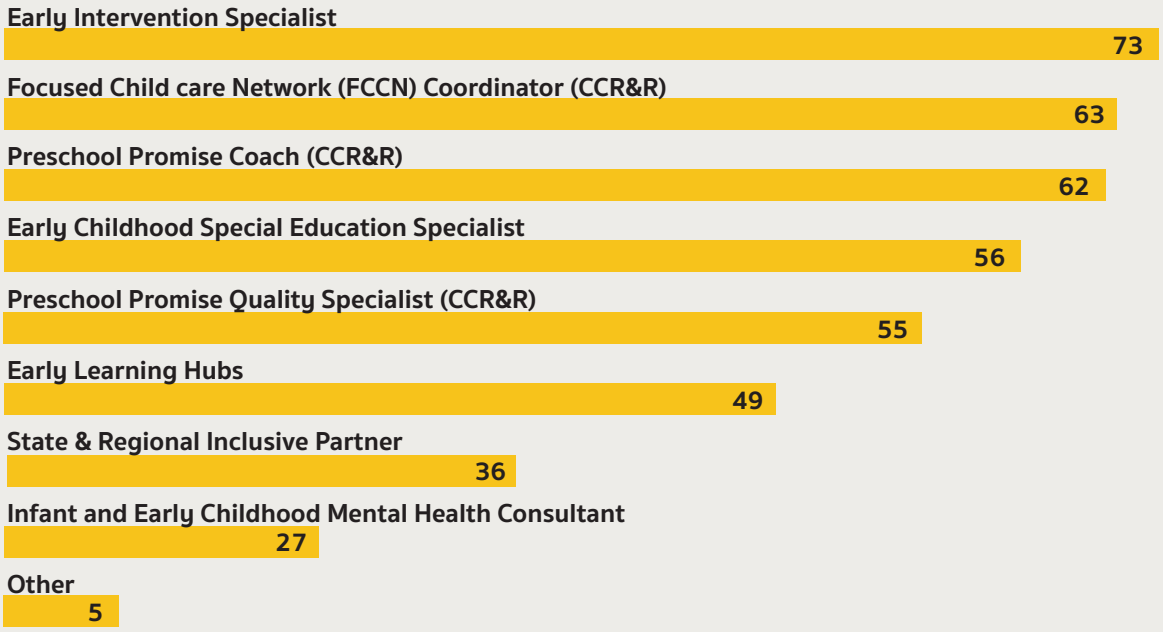
Table 11. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by Child Care Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Preschool for All Coach (CCR&R, Multnomah County Preschool for All programs only)	3.75	Among the minimal comments, this resource was positive overall.
Preschool for All Mental Health Consultant (Multnomah County Preschool for All programs only)	4.10	Among the minimal comments, this resource provided helpful consultation.
Child Care Substitutes of Oregon (TRI)	4.00	Among those who could access a sub, they had a positive experience. However, most educators could not see the benefits because of the long wait time (+ two years), and some did not meet the requirements to receive a substitute.

4.4 Preschool Promise Child Care Programs

Figure 4 shows the resources most utilized by the Preschool Promise Child care Programs. Early Intervention Specialists were the most utilized resource, and proved to be a satisfactory resource for educators (mean = 4.05). The highest rated Preschool Promise resource was the Preschool Promise Coach (CCR &R) (mean = 4.32).

Figure 4. Frequency of Resources Utilized by Preschool Promise Programs



There were 191 comments made by educators about resources accessed through Preschool Promise programs. The overall sentiment was positive, with educators valuing resources that offered in class tools and support– particularly with recognizing early signs of developmental delays and creating plans to support students. Educators also valued resources that helped enroll families in their programs when openings were

available, such as supports offered by Early Learning Hubs. This ensured programs maintained full enrollment. Mentorship and networking were also highly valued among educators utilizing resources through Preschool Promise child care Programs. However, hands on support was clearly the most appreciated, with many educators praising specific specialists or coaches that would help in their classrooms.

> *"We have also had a great experience working with their Quality Improvement Specialist for classroom observations, behavior management, and classroom environment inclusivity."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of Quality Improvement Specialists.*

A common concern from educators was the limited amount of time and infrequency of visits hindered the effectiveness of some resources.

> *"They are helpful, but when needing more support with a child, they can only make it twice a month for 45 min a day."*
>
> *- Child care early educator reviewing Early Intervention Specialist*

This is worsened when programs have high staff turnover. Educators and their students would lose support from specialists they developed a rapport with. As a consequence, students receive less quality support.

> *"High turnover has led to writing IFSP's without proper visits and not knowing students' needs."*
>
> *- Child care early educator reviewing Early Childhood Special Education Specialist*

Lastly, the effectiveness of some resources were negatively impacted if their staff supports were not consistent. This was found to be true for State and Regional Inclusive Partners, it is important that there is congruency among resource staff to avoid confusion among educators.

Table 12. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by Preschool Promise Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Preschool Promise Coach (CCR&R)	4.32	Those who utilized preschool coaches found their resources invaluable, especially when providing strategies in the classroom, with the curriculum, and supporting students with developmental delays. However, there is some inconsistency in quality depending on the coaches and the language of the resource.
Preschool Promise Quality Specialist (CCR&R)	4.17	This resource was particularly helpful in providing responsive, positive feedback and tailored support for child care facilities' needs, which led to successful outcomes. They also helped enroll child care facilities in the program by explaining the benefits, quality indicators, and what other preschools benefit from their services. Some educators expected more from quality coaches and found that the quality of support depended on the particular coach.

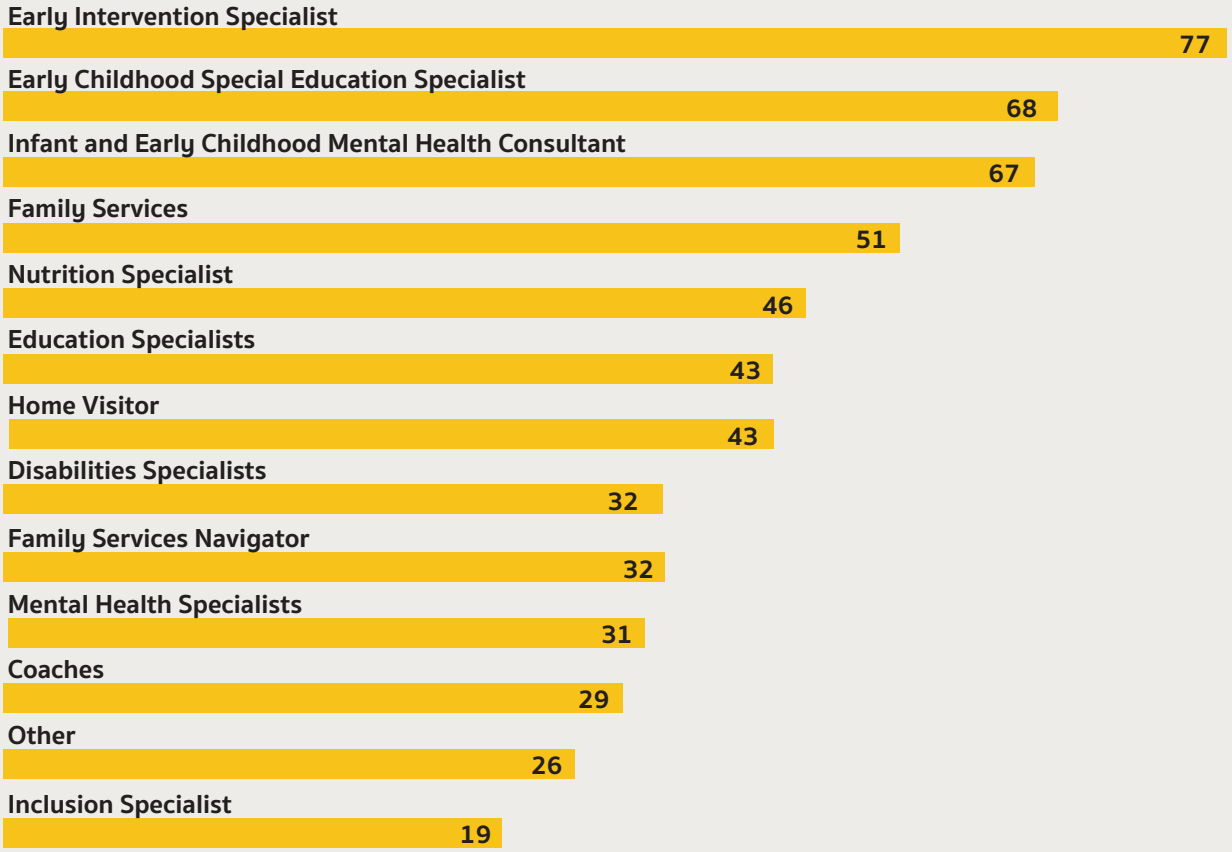
(cont.) Table 12. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by Preschool Promise Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinator (CCR&R)	4.32	Focus Child Care Network was highly valued among educators. Many praised specific mentors by name as the reason they have improved their work. The network offers guidance and in-depth support for educators regarding working with parents, enhancing children's educational experience, finding funding avenues, and professional development. The training was also highlighted as an invaluable resource for educators.
State & Regional Inclusive Partner	4.08	The comments on State or Regional partners were less positive. Some still found the resource helpful, especially around financial support and supporting children, but some found the advice given was impractical. Others had difficulty getting a hold of the State and Regional partners or found them to be not on the same page, which impacted the effectiveness of their resource.
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	4.07	Some educators found the specialist satisfactory in providing support, especially in providing hands-on involvement and utilizing play-based learning techniques. However, there were concerns about the rate of turnover of specialists and the inconsistency of support provided. Other educators criticize the consultation model because your support can be significantly hindered by a specialist who is less responsive or unsupportive.
Early Intervention Specialist	4.05	This resource's effectiveness depended on who came to support, but due to the frequent turnover of specialists, it is difficult to have consistency. Some educators had great experiences and were helped in identifying children with developmental delays and strategizing how to best support them in achieving their next milestone. Others felt unsupported, noting that the specialists were more distracting in the classroom, failed to finish tasks, or neglected to help with the children. Educators noted that the specialists are only in the classroom very infrequently and for a short period of time, which hinders the effectiveness of their resources. Some children need longer one-on-one support and this is impossible with the current time constraints.
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	4.42	The sentiment was generally positive for this resource but less specific. One educator praised a consultant agency for their help in meeting students' socio-emotional needs.
Early Learning Hubs	4.21	There were many positive experiences with working in HUB. This resource helped keep programs at full enrollment, provided program and resource updates on their websites and supported reaching out to families. The Washington County Early Learning Hub was named in particular as being responsive and advertising program availability. They also offer support in funding avenues, but not all funding options are accessible due to requirements. There was one concern that the hubs may be discouraging parents from using other educators to increase enrollment in their own programs.
Other, please specify	3.50	There were very few comments about other preschool promise resources utilized, but local CCRRs were mentioned as being resourceful in behavioral management and classroom inclusivity.

4.6 Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (OPK), Head Start, and Early Head Start Programs, Including Community Resources

Figure 5 shows the most utilized resources among the OPK, Head Start and Early Head Start services for child care programs. Family Services was the most utilized resource and was a satisfactory resource for educators (mean = 4.27). The highest rated Inclusion Specialist resource was the Early Childhood Special Education Specialist (mean = 4.39).

Figure 5. Frequency of Resources Utilized by OPK, Head Start, & Early Head Start Programs



There were 193 comments made by educators about resources accessed through OPK, Head Start, and Early Head Start programs services for Community Child care Programs, and the overall sentiment was positive. However, some resources had less comments than others. Educators appreciated the skills that were shared through the 1-on-1 support. Educators learned how to better support students with disabilities, create in class activities, and provide balanced meals. All of these skills were influential in benefiting the classroom environment and improving the quality of care.

> *"They provided strategies to help children express themselves and build friendships, which has improved our classroom atmosphere."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of Early Intervention Specialists.*

Educators used resources that support families through addressing basic needs by giving updates to educators on resource availability, and creating individualized plans and opportunities for feedback. Being a connector between families and educators by fostering mutual respect was highly appreciated by educators.

> *"Family services has been such a support for our center. It's given us access to helpful resources, and it feels like we're not alone in guiding families through tough times."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of Family Services.*

However, early educators did not appreciate resources that were not applicable to their classroom challenges or were not accessible due to waitlists or high staff turnover. These challenges impacted the level of support and programs accessibility to early educators.

> *"While the resources are decent, I believe there is room for improvement in terms of accessibility and follow-up support."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant.*

There was a desire for more follow-up with resources and more culturally specific resources– especially for Indigenous communities.

Table 13. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by OPK, Head Start, & Early Head Start Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Family Services Navigator	4.27	Home visitors were influential in providing support to families. Their resources helped connect both educators and families to resources. One educator especially appreciated the feedback feature because it allows for consistent updates on children's progress. Their resources and satisfaction were also similar to those of Early Head Starts family navigators.
Home Visitor	4.05	Although there were few comments, educators valued the resources, individualized plans with families, and the ability to adjust their strategies based on the information provided by home visitors.
Nutrition Specialist	4.22	The majority of educators' experience working with Nutrition specialists was very positive. Educators grew more confident in providing nutritious, balanced, and culturally diverse meals for their students. The recipes and ingredients helped create exciting options and accommodate dietary restrictions.
Disabilities Specialists	4.29	There were very few comments for this resource, and among those who commented, there were mixed satisfaction levels. Some educators found the resource helpful in supporting students with disabilities and their families. The resource was beneficial in improving teachers' approaches in the classroom. Others found this resource challenging to apply in their classrooms.
Family Services Specialist	4.20	Overall, family services were thought to have a positive impact on families. This resource was especially helpful in connecting families with housing, stress management, food insecurity, medical support and counseling services. These resources also helped educators understand and respect different family dynamics. Family services also helped build community by supporting educators in organizing family events. This resource is integral in creating inclusive environments and acting as a supporter to families and educators.

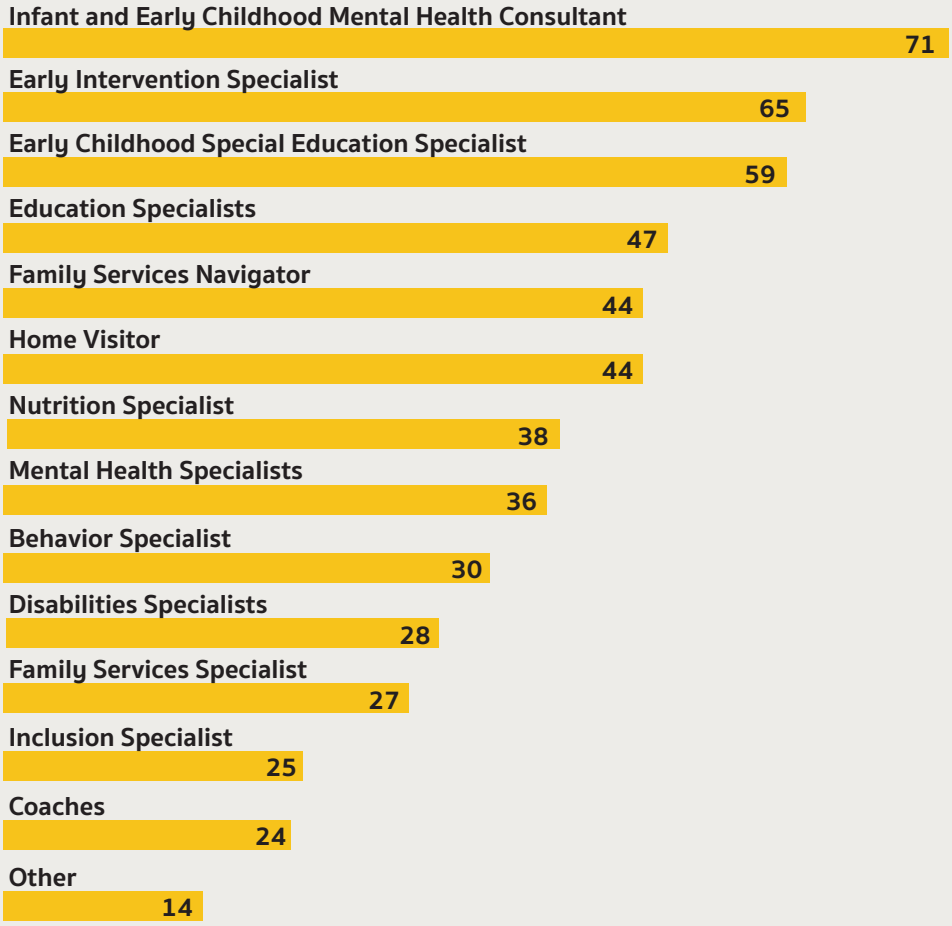
(cont.) Table 13. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by OPK, Head Start, & Early Head Start Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Mental Health Specialists	4.23	There were very few comments, but generally, educators felt satisfied with the specialists and found them knowledgeable and helpful in providing more capacity in the classroom. There is a waitlist, which can affect accessibility.
Education Specialists	4.14	Education specialists were praised for creating various strategies to foster independence, confidence, and learning among students regardless of their needs. This included creating structure in the class and other creative techniques.
Coaches	4.17	There were few comments, but educators mentioned coaches being beneficial for those needing extra support.
Inclusion Specialist	4.39	There were few comments, but educators were able to learn how to better support students with more needs. It was challenging to get students into the system due to the waitlist.
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	4.71	Infant mental health specialists were found to be very knowledgeable and helpful in supporting infants. Influential in educator education and strategies for positive development, especially in attachment and family dynamics.
Other, please specify	4.00	Other resources include an Oregon Child Development Coalition (OCDC) family advocate who is great to work with. In addition, Umatilla-Morrow Head Starts are utilized when there are families that educators can't support.
Early Intervention Specialist	4.25	Overall educators found early intervention specialists to help identify early signs of developmental concerns and create better learning environments. These supports helped provide personalized plans for students to help with their progress, and their methods were especially helpful for students needing more socio-emotional support. The fun interactive activities used in the classroom helped in children's engagement and aided in the communication with families about their child's needs. Some educators wished the specialist could come more often and spend more time in the classroom supporting the educator.
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	4.09	This resource improved educators' understanding of students and strategies for creating a more inclusive environment for all students. Specialties were able to provide inclusive activities that suit a variety of students' needs and increased participation and comfortability. It also guided educators in building strong relationships with families to foster collaboration in their child's development. One educator was concerned about the high turnover rate causing unfamiliarity between the specialist and the students.
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	4.37	There were more mixed reviews for infant and early child consultants. Some educators found the resource to help understand their students' emotional needs. Other educators wished for more improvement in the amount, accessibility, and quality of resources that were provided. Some educators mentioned the specialist causing more stress and needing more follow-up support from specialists.
Other (community programs)	3.00	Very few comments, but one critic was that the resource was not culturally reflective.

4.7 Early Head Start Child care Partnership Programs (EHS-CCP), Including Community Resources

Figure 6 shows the most utilized resources among the Early Head Start Child care Partnership services for child care programs including community programs. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants were the most utilized resource, and was the highest rated resource (mean = 4.41).

Figure 6. Frequency of Resource Utilized by Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Programs (EHS-CCP)



There were 270 comments made by educators about resources accessed through Early Head Start Child care Partnership pPrograms and the overall sentiment was positive. Educators valued similar aspects of resources accessed through EHS-CCP Early Start programs as they did for resources accessed through OPK/HS/EHS programs. Educators appreciate resources that share applicable skills, and implement strategies that make participation more accessible for all students.

> *"What really stood out was their compassion and non-judgmental attitude. They created a safe space for us to share our struggles and helped us develop strategies for coping and moving forward."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of Family Services Specialists.*

Educators also appreciated the resources that included supporting families in reaching their goals with

compassion and understanding. For students needing more support, resources that helped families through the referral process for disability services were highly valued. All of these aspects created a positive impact in the classroom and at home.

Table 14. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Programs (EHS-CCP)

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Family Services Navigator	4.02	Many educators expressed satisfaction with family navigators with their knowledge and helpfulness. Some educators had personal experiences with using their services and praised family navigators for their resources and guidance in completing paperwork. Although the resource is helpful, a few educators mentioned that it is a difficult to access resource.
Home Visitor	4.19	There are strong partnerships between home visitors and educators, and there was a general satisfaction with the support. Home visitors were considered kind, resourceful, and influential in connecting families to recurring playgroups.
Nutrition Specialist	4.03	This resource provided helpful nutritional information. Educators felt like they understood the importance of nutrition and the science behind the suggestions. Some educators desired more time with the specialist and more focus on indigenous and culturally specific foods.
Disabilities Specialists	4.25	There was agreement among educators that this resource was helpful. Educators mentioned how the specialist helped them create a more inclusive environment, and families understood the importance of a referral. Overall, the impact was positive in the classroom and at home.
Family Services Specialist	4.12	Educators are an excellent resource for families, especially when achieving their goals. Their effectiveness is attributed to their non-judgemental and compassionate model; ultimately, educators had a positive experience.
Mental Health Specialists	4.36	Many educators had a positive experience with the specialist in creating a safe space and supporting educators. One educator shared they felt unheard regarding feedback about the program itself. There was a desire for mental health support for educators.
Education Specialists	4.08	This resource was found to be helpful to educators in ensuring their classrooms are developmentally appropriate and increase participation among students. Educators desire to have more time with the specialist.
Coaches	4.13	The educator appreciated the opportunities to learn and grow through the coach's resources. Coaches were praised for being insightful, respectful, and following work agreements and core values. The coach also gave helpful advice, and was particularly helpful in motivating and inspiring the educators.
Inclusion Specialist	3.92	There was a less positive experience with the inclusion specialist. One educator mentioned that the inclusion specialist was similar to the disabilities specialist. Another educator felt their concerns and questions about the process were disregarded. The other educators had generally but nonspecific positive responses.

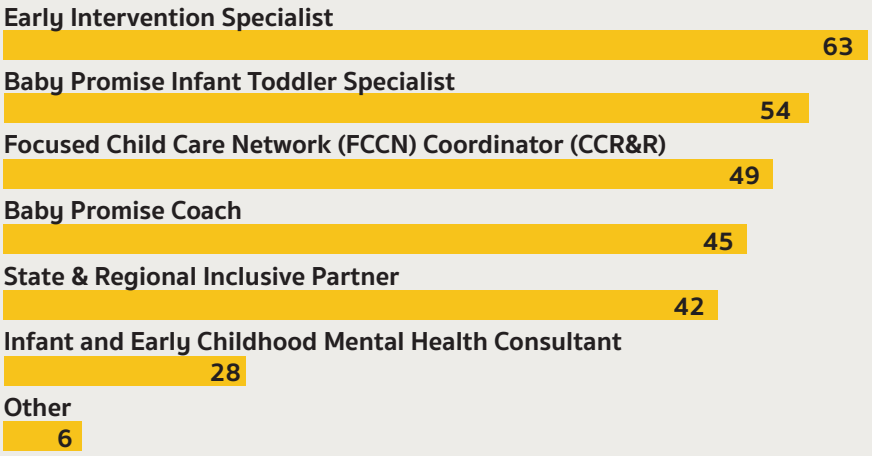
(cont.) Table 14. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Programs (EHS-CCP)

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Behavior Specialist	3.83	Educators generally thought the specialist brought useful resources into the classroom to support children's needs. There was some criticism regarding the specialist's evasiveness and too individually focused on the child with a plan but neglected that child's peer interactions.
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	4.32	The overall sentiment is positive, with educators praising the resources, helpfulness, creativity, and inclusive support. One educator had a more neutral response, noting that the resource did not meet their expectation. Other educators noted that the resource helped in managing big behaviors.
Other, please specify	3.00	Other resources included indigenous support and EECARES. Indigenous support was very satisfactory, and there was a desire to continue collaborating and supporting culturally specific resources. EECARES was criticized for not fully addressing children's socio-emotional needs.
Early Intervention Specialist	4.09	Educators appreciated the collaboration of the specialist. Specialists offered a wealth of knowledge about child development, mental health needs, and learning strategies that put many educators at ease. One complaint was that it was hard to receive adequate time with them with their busy schedules and a long list of clients.
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	4.17	Educators were generally satisfied with the support but noted that the specialist seemed less connected to staff and coaches. Some experienced a steep learning curve in the beginning when implementing strategies. There was a desire to collaborate among other educators to aid in all resources.
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	4.41	Educators appreciated the collaboration with challenging behaviors and their availability to work with families. Some educators wished for more support and resources in this area. Others found that, although the beginning was difficult, they could address challenges.
Other	3.67	Other resources included the Native American Rehabilitation Association of the Northwest (NARA), Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA), Native Montessori, and National Indian Child Welfare Association (NICWA) among other Indigenous supporters. Educators mention wanting more Indigenous representation in ECE spaces

4.8 Baby Promise Child Care Programs

Figure 7 shows the most utilized resources among the Baby Promise Child care Programs. Early Intervention Specialists were the most utilized resource, and this form of support was a satisfactory resource for educators (mean = 4.25). The highest-rated resource was the Baby Promise Coach (mean = 4.33).

Figure 7. Frequency of Resources Utilized by Baby Promise Programs



There were 99 comments made about Baby Promise Programs. The overall sentiment was more mixed. Educators appreciated when they were able to collaborate with coaches or specialists in the classroom; Being able to collaborate, problem-solve, and gain practical strategies helped with burnout and increased confidence.

> *"I loved having a coach coming in, observing and giving me feedback. She always had great ideas and made me feel like I'm making all the difference in the world. It helped prevent burnout, stay focused and feel professional."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of Baby Promise Coach.*

Educators experienced challenges in accessing certain resources. Some resources were not as responsive, preventing educators from benefiting. Some resources are only operational during the school year, so those needing support in the summer are not able to receive it.

Table 15. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by Baby Promise Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Baby Promise Coach	4.33	Educators greatly appreciated the baby promise coach's ability to provide personalized feedback and practical strategies, which prevented burnout and increased confidence. Educators mentioned appreciating coaches' one-on-one attention to specific students and how they could create personalized learning activities. Their support was influential in creating inclusive environments that addressed all children's needs.

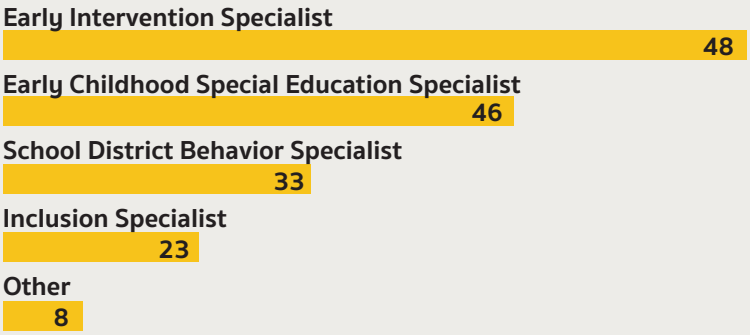
(cont.) Table 15. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by Baby Promise Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Baby Promise Infant Toddler Specialist	4.30	Educators were highly satisfied with the specialists and appreciated being able to brainstorm and collaborate with them. They also were satisfied with the quality of care and knowledge that allowed them to grow professionally. Educators were able to access tools and resources with ease.
Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinator (CCR&R)	4.02	There were more mixed reviews of these resources. Some educators mentioned having challenges contacting coordinators and feeling misled, while others were satisfied with the support.
State & Regional Inclusive Partner	4.12	There were more mixed reviews with this resource; some believed it was more challenging to support, especially for diverse needs, because of limited resources. Another noted that the beginning was tough but became easier with time. Others were generally satisfied, with no other specific information.
Early Intervention Specialist	4.25	There were challenges with accessing this resource in the summer when enrollment is high, and this resource is unavailable. Other educators had difficulty accessing the right resources for their child care facility. Some educators were stratified with the support, especially for children with developmental needs.
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	4.25	Consultants support educators in managing the emotional and behavioral needs of the children by providing tools and strategies. Some educators felt they gained valuable knowledge but want more resources on how to change behaviors.
Other, please specify	2.33	No applicable comments

4.9 School District PreK Programs

Figure 8 shows the most utilized resources among the School District PreK Programs. Early Intervention Specialists were the most utilized resource and was the most satisfactory resource for educators (mean = 4.12).

Figure 8. Frequency of Resources Utilized by School District Pre-Kindergarten Programs



There were 95 comments made about resources accessed through School District PreK programs. The overall sentiment was less positive. Educators still valued specialists coming in and providing resources for students needing more support, specifically for students with autism and speech needs.

> *"I feel that the resources I received have been quite helpful in addressing the diverse needs of the children in my care. "*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of School District Behavior Specialist*

Resources with consistent and communicative specialists who provided strategies and assessments for these children were greatly appreciated. Some educators desired more hands-on support or more time with the specialist.

> *"It was successful because ultimately we were able to connect the student and family to Head Start services for the next year. I wasn't very satisfied because I think I expected more hands-on support than just observation."*
>
> *- Child care early educator review of Early Intervention Specialist*

Similar to other resources, educators were impacted by staff turnover and the lack of follow up from resources.

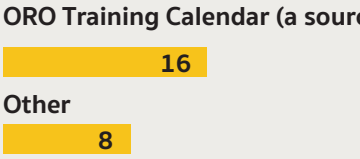
Table 16. Satisfaction with Resources Utilized by School District Pre-Kindergarten Programs

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
Early Intervention Specialist	4.12	There were more missed reviews of this resource. Educators appreciated having access to in-class support for speech therapy and behavioral issues from specialists. They also appreciated that the specialists were willing to inform, listen, and guide educators. Educator desired to have more time and one-on-one support with the specialist. Also, more access to interactive toys, adaptive equipment, and flexible activities. They also provide hands-on support to students with greater needs. There was also a concern about the caseload of specialists preventing these needs from being addressed
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	4.10	Feedback was largely positive, especially regarding the support received for children with speech and mental health needs. However, staffing issues and the need for follow-up support limited the effectiveness of the resources. Overall, the resources aided educators and students in the classroom.
School District Behavior Specialist	4.09	Educators appreciated their responsiveness and consistency in which specialists would meet with students in the summer and school year programming. One educator mentioned they were less knowledgeable in supporting younger children, but many educators still appreciated their support in coping strategies and behavior improvements.
Inclusion Specialist	3.48	Educators had less positive experiences with this resource. One educator valued the autism referral and assessment support received, but others desired support in strategies for the classroom that were new and not already implemented. Other educators mentioned that their previous experience had been better, but due to staff changes, they no longer have access to particular specialists.
Other	3.17	Other resources and strategies were working one-on-one with students, and districts K-12 general funds. Educators noted that school district support in childhood equity in ECSE transportation was not enough. Other educators had challenges in encouraging partners to follow up with receiving resources.

4.10 Other Indirect Resources

Figure 9 shows the most utilized resources among the other indirect resources accessible to services for child care programs. The ORO training calendar was the most utilized resource and was a satisfactory resource for educators (mean = 3.53). Other resources that Educators listed in this section rated the other resources not listed as were rated more satisfactory (mean = 3.57) than the ORO training calendar, but only marginally.

Figure 10. Frequency of Accessing Other Indirect Resources



Educators said the OROonline calendar needs more support. Educators criticized the first module for being too simplistic and other educators were not satisfied with the timeliness of training. Others appreciated being informed about new training and enjoyed the web format. There was a desire for resources with more diverse staff, and a culturally specific specialist for Indigenous communities.

Other resources included ECE through ORO, CCR&R, Native Health Institute, Barbies Village, NICW, DHS, MEDP, Inclusion and Equity Leadership team. Educators mentioned appreciating working with others that value growing strong relationships with local communities. Experiences with the ECE department were mixed because of the lack of flexibility in their guidelines, which impacts the effectiveness of the resource.

Table 17. Satisfaction of Accessing Other Indirect Resources

Resources	Mean	Comment Summaries
ORO Training Calendar (a source for information about upcoming trainings)	3.53	This resource needs more support. Educator critics of the first module for being too simplistic, and other educators were not satisfied with the timeliness of training. Others did appreciate being informed about new training and enjoyed the web format. There was a desire for resources, more diverse staff, and a culturally specific specialist for Indigenous communities.
Other, please specify	3.57	Other resources included ECE through ORO, CCR&R, Native Health Institute, Barbies Village, NICW, DHS, MEDP, Inclusion and Equity Leadership team. Educators mentioned appreciating working with others that value growing strong relationships with local communities. Experiences with the ECE department were mixed because of the lack of flexibility in their guidelines which impacts the effectiveness of the resource.

4.11 Chapter Four Summary of Findings

- This survey provided a high-level overview of the existing resources available to early childhood educators across different child care programs in the state of Oregon. These resources represent those funded by local, state and federal systems.
- Educators reported accessing a variety of different resources across different programs.
- Educators generally reported higher levels of satisfaction with the resources they accessed, however, they also shared opportunities for improvements. Suggested improvements were resource specific.

5

Relational Approaches to Prevention

Relational Modalities for Child First Care – Approaches to Preventing Suspension and Expulsion

This chapter presents original research conducted by the Research Justice Institute; ilt sets out to understand, from the perspectives of child care early educators and programs leaders, to inform how suspension and expulsion can be mitigated in Oregon. The analysis is grounded in the lived experiences of people who are child care early educators and those who work closely with early educators. This chapter demonstrates the power of qualitative data as evidence that generates deep insights into what is working to keep children in care settings, what challenges and frustrations early educators experience, and what it takes to ensure that the well-being of all children is centered.

Additionally important to note is that this chapter demonstrates the ecosystem in which suspensions and expulsions take place. The contributing factors which may result in an early learning program choosing to suspend or expel a young child are often more than just the child's behaviors or abilities. Additional factors can be educators wellbeing, program-family relationship, availability of resources, economic considerations, as well as others. Disparities in the rates of children experiences exclusionary practices who have intersectional identities can also be linked to systemic and structural racism and ableism.

The data gathered for this chapter comes from:

- Interviews with early educators
- Focus groups with early educators
- Meetings with the Every Child Belongs (ECB) Regional Service Educator (RSP)
- Meetings with DELC staff and other ECE professionals

The analysis of this data reveals two overarching insights about preventing suspension and expulsion:

1. A child, especially one showing big or challenging behaviors, must be approached with deep care and consideration. We refer to this as a Child First Care Approach.
2. Early educators are embedded in a variety of relationships that shape and influence their capacity to provide Child First Care. These relationships need to be fostered in unique ways so that they are stable and supportive pathways for Child First Care.

These are the insights we dig deeper into throughout this chapter.

We open the chapter by defining the **Child First Care approach** as an orientation that encapsulates how early educators have been successful at keeping children in programs and how they desire to care for the children in their programs. *Child First Care, we argue, must be at the core of any suspension and expulsion prevention program.*

We present the five elements of the Child First Care approach:

1. Relationship-based care
2. Creating community networks of care
3. Centering culturally expansive care settings
4. Flexible and milestone-focused approaches – Developmental appropriate practices
5. Removing othering and punitive practices

Each element is accompanied by a series of approaches that help illustrate its meaning and how early educators have enacted it. We conclude our discussion of Child First Care with a summary table of its main elements and approaches.

It should be noted that this approach is not new to the profession of early learning and care. Children have long been the center of the profession. The National Association for the Education of Young Children, the leading national professional association for early learning professionals since 1926 centers young children in the mission, vision and ethic statement for early educators. Relationship based learning pedagogies demonstrate a child centered approach to early learning, as well as developmentally appropriate practices. In Oregon, the Department of Early Learning and Care has partnered with several governmental departments to center the needs of children and families through Raise Up Oregon.

Equally important however, is the history of the profession of child care and early education. Like most caregiving professions, the child care sector stems from a system of oppression and white supremacy. The legacy of unpaid domestic service and enslavement has contributed to a field that is chronically underpaid and undervalued. Additionally, an unintended consequence to an unwavering focus on the child has been that the needs of the adult caregiver and educator have been ignored. Within the culture of oppression, the basic needs of the (mostly female) caregiver and educator have been put on the back burner, resulting in the perspectives presented here: early educators and leaders who are burnt out, under-resourced, under paid, feeling under valued and struggling to establish connections and relationships. As a system, early educators have been asked to put the needs of the children above their own, which over time has resulted in harm to the educator.

This Child First Care approach should not be mistaken as a reinforcement of the ideal that the caregiver should be sacrificed for the child. Rather, it is intended to highlight the importance of the human connection between child and educator, one that can only exist when the educator is supported and able to show up fully and wholly. The system must continue to focus on support for the educator, to allow the educator the ability to be in relationship with the child.

Thus, we will also describe the **five relational** modalities that, when fostered and supported, create a secure scaffolding for early educators to deliver Child First Care. These relational modalities illustrate the connections that are essential for early educators to sustain a successful approach to care and running a business:

6. Early educator-Child
7. Early educator-Family
8. Early educator-Early educator
9. Early educator-Specialist
10. Early educator-Dominant systems

Each relational pathway is discussed in its own section, and each section follows this structure:

- Definition of the relational pathway
- Elements that are central to the relational pathway
- Approaches that further illustrate the pathway or offer ways to enact and/or support it
- Summary tables of findings

Child First Care prioritizes relationships with the child as the starting place. The term draws inspiration from the “Housing First” model. This model is an approach to getting people experiencing homelessness into housing first and then addressing other issues like behavioral health, employment, etc. It is responsive to meeting children where they are at, understanding that children can and do act on their own terms, and building in approaches that are flexible to the child’s needs but also include consistency and routine. By first being in relationship with the child, other strategies for preventing suspension and expulsion make early educators, children, and families more successful. High-quality relationship-based care has long been acknowledged as a foundation to a child’s development and an important element to the profession of child care.

While trends in classroom evaluation have focused on overall classroom climate, recent research supports that the individual child-teacher relationship has more overall impact on a child’s development than the classroom. Rucinsky et al (2018) presents that the child-teacher relationship is the key to fostering social-emotional functioning and future academic success, not the overall classroom environment.

The framing of early educators’ primary responsibility as Child First Care was inspired by interviews with early educators.

For many early educators we interviewed and spoke with, their work is grounded in some basic, yet no less profound, truths: it is the responsibility of

adults and caretakers to find ways to meaningfully relate to and foster the conditions for the success of all children. Their reflections are presented here, as they were provided.These reflective practices are supported through an infrastructure of professional development, peer-to-peer supports, community lead coordinated responses to requests for additional support and educator informed system improvement cycles. It should be noted that educator reflections can often exist only within the waters they swim in, and not necessarily reflect the greater ecosystem of available resources and approaches. Thus, where appropriate with DELC, additional context has been added in the DELC Response Letter included at the end. These are elements which are built into the foundation of Every Child Belongs. How can early educators be successful at this? We came up with the Child First Care approach as an essential road map so that we could identify its key elements and articulate what success looks like. We heard five key elements of classroom knowledge that helped support keeping children in programs. These are the five elements that make up the Child First Care approach:

1. Relationship-Based Care
2. Creating Community Networks of Care
3. Centering culturally expansive care settings
4. Flexible and milestone-focused approaches – developmental appropriate practices
5. Removing othering and punitive approaches

Next, we describe each of these elements of Child First Care in detail.

Relationship-Based Care

Early educators stressed the importance of real connections with children so they know you care about them. One early educator noted, "Until you have a real relationship with children, it will be working with them; they know you don't like them, that you're not genuine – don't want them, like them, or care about them." Early educators know whether children can sense a real caring connection or not. Establishing this genuine connection is a fundamental practice for preventing suspension and expulsion.

> *"Kids just want to feel loved and have a connection with them. They can't say that, but that's actually what they want. Form good relationships with kids."*

From early educators, we learned about various approaches to establishing meaningful connections with children, especially those with big or challenging behaviors. From these conversations, we identified a foundational understanding of the importance of relationship-based care and early education.

Socio-emotional maturity. Early educators know that approaching their relationship with each child from a place of love, grace, and curiosity is fundamental and requires a high level of socio-emotional maturity.

> *"I am their hands, words – it's an emotional intervention to understand, read their behavior, understand."*

Allyship with children. Early educators involve a series of actions and behaviors that recognize a relationship between children and their caregivers. This is possible by acknowledging children at their highs and recognizing cues that may initiate big behaviors.

> *"I have always been more hands on and working with individuals directly. I am an observer first, and then I engage. I try to figure out if that individual does better with less verbal communication and more nonverbal, if they are sensitive to*

> *touch or if they need a little touch if there's somebody that's really sensitive to smell or lighting, if they have high medical needs assistance in the restroom. All those different things can be a huge part of their day."*

Generative practices. Early educators create the practice of inviting children's families to share strategies to model and maintain from home to the center. Both demonstrate ways of being for the child, early educators, and families to model. This enables each day to be a new start in all spaces.

Creating Community Networks of Care

Early educators also shared the significance of creating extensive networks of care for children. An early educator shared, "It's hard for me when I cannot help a child. I've never had a child not thrive in my program. I always think of how to make a space that would help them thrive." Early educators are aware of their limitations and their power to create change and communal possibilities for children. Care networks enable early educators and families to be open and aware of change without limiting a child's capacity to grow.

> *"I hold on to kids, even when it's really challenging."*

From early educators, we learned about several approaches to creating community networks of care.

Wraparound care. Early educators approach wraparound care as a means of connecting families with resources and services to strengthen their networks. Many early educators are seeing behavioral issues appear due to the difficulty in meeting basic needs. Wraparound care enables early educators to connect families to resources without stigma, as it becomes a normalized practice.

> *"Knowing there's a perfect place for every single child, but it's knowing the conditions in which individual children can thrive and succeed: Earning those boundaries and knowing that because I feel every child has a perfect place. Some children need to be next door because there's a family child care. Next door to me, some kids need to be with Grandma, and some need to be in a huge center. There's a perfect place for every child, but this may not be the perfect place for that child. And I've learned that it's okay to say no because this child needs something better than I can give them."*

Identifying availability between adults. Early educators share that they must be transparent with each other. It signals to others where they are at and can recognize when one is burnt out. This is significant because it shows that there may be certain behaviors they don't have the capacity for, and can support a reduction of educator isolation. This can be especially important for family child care early educators, who are often alone with children for the majority of their days.

Modeling peer-to-peer community care. Early educators have witnessed children supporting their peers during big or inappropriate disruptions. Peer-to-peer in this case, refers to children supporting each other. This has looked like other students giving space, water, or sharing kind words.

Centering Culturally Expansive Care Settings

Early educators of color, non-English speaking or English as a second language speakers, and those with lived experience outside of the PNW

and U.S. shared many important considerations to help children and families feel seen, cared for, and connected with. This included building programs and shaping classroom experiences that are open and responsive to cultural diversity and differences. However, many early educators who were white, monolingual, and from the PNW did not share many approaches or have much experience working with students of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We share that caregiving settings should be understood as places for expansiveness, where community connections can shape caregiving.

> *"A lot depends on the teacher. If they don't include their cultures into the curriculum or events, then it's hard to get the new kids and those from other countries to feel more inclusive."*

From early educators, we heard about several approaches which demonstrate meaningful connections with children's cultural traditions in terms of training, language sharing, and cultural workers.

Weaving race and culture. Early educators noted the lived experiences of children and ways in which disciplinary policies disproportionately impact children of color. Cultural inclusivity in a classroom involves bridging race and culture to create a welcoming environment. It also includes valuing cultural identities as they are realized and experienced outside the classroom.

> *"Our program is primarily Latino, and we had an Indian mom who wanted to show our students a cultural dance and henna. We asked all the parents for consent to do henna on the children, and we saw our Indian student blossom. She dressed up like her mom, who was performing, and everyone got to see her."*

Environments attuned to diverse needs. Successful early educators create environments in the classroom, in the family child care program, and in the care center that meet children's range of needs. If the environment meets the needs of children with disabilities or those with histories of big or challenging behaviors, the space becomes more inclusive and comfortable for all children.

> *"We just have to meet these kids where they are every day. Can we change their clothes? Can we give them good food? Can we give them extra sleep?"*

Linguistic diversity. Early educators highlighted the importance of centering and expanding the support for BIPOC and English as a second language communities. For children, language impacts how they see and experience transitions from home to their early learning care settings. Languages shape children's familiarity and safety in the world and raises awareness of resources and practices.

> *"Our work is relationship-based and trust-based. Sharing the same ideas, traditions, customs, and language helps build that trust and reinforces the relationships. Not only understanding but respecting based on knowledge."*

Cultivating culturally specific care. BIPOC early educators highlighted three culturally specific ways in which community provides support for children and each other. This includes concepts of *promotoras*, *convivienca*, and community social groups for managing community desires and needs. *Promotoras* are community links between public and dominant institutions. Convivienca was a strategy for at-home early educators whose spaces are communal and foster the idea of co-living. Finally, community social groups on social media enable BIPOC early educators to share resources and strategies.

> *"Sometimes, these people don't have their hearts in the right place – most of the staff working here are not even from our community – we need to see more people in these leadership positions who know our families and live in the community."*

Flexible and Milestone-Focused Approaches – Developmental Appropriate Practices

Early educators understand that each child is different, and things change daily, so they are always flexible with their approaches and focus on children's needs and milestones. These approaches signal the need for awareness on age appropriate behaviors, predictable routines, transitional cues, and emphasizing individual children's needs. An early educator noted, "With infants, I don't want to say it's a behavior. They are just learning. We teach them sign language, which lowered the biting because they could communicate."

Flexible and milestone-focused approaches allow children to be seen in their respective age categories and diverse needs. Early educators shared the diverse ways in which they interact with children. This is another area where relationship-based early education, and specific primary caregiving, is a supportive approach. From what they shared, we identified these approaches.

> *"Regarding infants and toddlers: you have to recognize that they will reach milestones very differently at that age. You can't have a one-size-fits-all approach to evaluating them"*

> *"It's gonna change a lot because infants and toddlers. Don't reach milestones at the same time. Everybody's different. One baby may be crawling at six months. The other won't do it till a year. So, you have to remember those things when evaluating them and figuring out what you need to do. Not every baby is the same, and that's huge."*

From early educators, we learned about several flexible and milestone-focused approaches:

Maintain consistency with specialists. Early educators stressed the importance of collaborating with specialists and scheduling weekly or monthly visits. Specialists in the classroom or using Ages and Stages Developmental Questionnaires enable early educators to normalize diverse behavioral and developmental conversations to achieve milestones. Recognize diverse needs: Early educators approach milestones pertinent to the diverse needs of children. This means that a child's big behaviors can be identified as relating to frustration or delayed developmental skills. Identifying a developmental need allows early educators to create a space to nurture children's needs and schedule ways to accommodate them.

> *"One size fits all doesn't work. We need flexibility since some are ready to eat and others are not, for example."*

Identify individual goals. Early educators shared that children with big behaviors often lean into outdoor time and "space" as ways to ground themselves. Various early educators identified outdoor time as a preventative practice to prepare children for feelings of self-awareness and self-regulation. This can be a powerful way to engage students and provide emotional support.

Removing Othering and Punitive Practices

Early educators aim to integrate children into larger groups rather than expelling or isolating them. Cultivating relationships with children is about creating practices, skills, and spaces to nurture their well-being. A Peruvian early educator shared, "We have zero expulsion and are 100% inclusive. These are pretty words, but how we confront these two themes is challenging. We accept children as they are and incorporate them into the larger group. They have personalized care but are not taken out of the room but placed within the group. We avoid expulsion in all our programs, Preschool Promise, Baby Promise." Working with children requires follow through. From the moment they are accepted into programs, they become a part of the space and require support in integrating.

> *"Moving away from punitive forms of child care: over the years, as I've become more educated about it, I've moved away from things like timeouts and things that are more punishment-based toward Things that are a little bit more like social, emotional, and trying to spend put a little bit more focus with those kids on naming feelings, talking about what your choices and actions are making other kids feel how you're feeling, If a child is having difficult behaviors."*

From early educators, we learned about four approaches to removing othering and punitive practices.

Developing restorative practices. Early educators shared language, games, and practices in work with children with big behaviors. They stressed the importance of developing restorative ways of addressing children's behaviors within the classroom and in communal spaces.

Managing feelings. Early educators looked for ways to help children communicate their feelings. Several mentioned actions, phrases, and tools for developing strategies to cultivate communication in their classes. They also highlighted the importance of recognizing when children with big behaviors were doing well.

> *"Working on things like empathy I find can help difficult behaviors to just the child becoming more aware of what they're feeling and more aware of how it's making the people around them feel."*

Creating a positive classroom environment. Early educators emphasize the importance of cultivating a positive classroom environment as it impacts attendance, participation, and relationships. It also affirms that the early educator is tending to the needs of children with inclusive and restorative approaches.

Acknowledging systemic injustices. Early educators emphasize the importance of addressing the "cradle to prison pipeline" by supporting children early in their education. This includes prioritizing evaluations, developing pathways or trainings for families to advocate for their children, and incorporating a team of resources to support children throughout their educational journey. An early educator shared, "It is never too late to support the kid - do it now before it gets worse in middle or high school."

Table 18. Summary child first care approach elements

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Relationship-based care	Social-emotional maturity	• Modeling unconditional care • Being curious • Positive discipline and reinforcement
	Environments attuned to diverse needs	• Integrating various sensory-based activities • Creating spaces for neurodiverse children that meet their unique needs • Understanding what the "right space" means for different children
	Allyship with children	• Recognizing cues before the eruption of a big behavior and practicing "redirection." • Being in the moment when a child expresses big needs or behaviors • Acknowledging "breakthrough moments"
	Generative practices	• Inviting families to share strategies in a communal setting and training space • Modeling what is wanted
Creating community networks of care	Wraparound care	• Identifying family needs • Connecting families with resources • Establishing child care centers as bountiful
	Acknowledging systemic injustices	• Intervention before K-12 • Evaluations including plans for families and educators • Identifying resources and support as soon as need is identified
	Identifying availability between adults	• Recognizing need for emotional intervention • Awareness of emotional capacity • Collaborating with families on each other's workloads
Centering culturally expansive care settings	Weaving race and culture	• Explore teacher and community-led trainings • Get involved with student's cultures and of local communities • Incorporate difference as a tool for creating an expansive center
	Linguistic diversity	• Support bilingual students in both languages • Show monolingual students the power of linguistic diversity • Ask families to share songs, recipes, and stories
	Cultivating culturally specific care	• Identify cultural workers like *promotoras* • Incorporate cultural concepts like *convivienca* (co-living) • Support BIPOC educators' social groups

(cont.) Table 18. Summary child first care approach elements

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Flexible and milestone-focused approaches – Developmental appropriate practices	Maintain consistency with specialists	• Consistency with specialists visits • Emphasize evaluations • Use standardized metrics and questionnaires
	Recognize diverse needs	• Identify temperaments related to anger • Identify temperaments related to developing social developmental skills • Caregiving is required in working infants and toddlers
	Identify individual goals	• Create individual milestone goals • Prepare children to socialize at their own pace(s) • Emphasize children's interests
Removing Othering and punitive practices	Developing restorative practices	• Use games to engage students • Implement peer-to-peer conflict resolution practices • Create sayings for students to repeat and model
	Managing feelings	• Taking a pause to reflect inward • Learning to apologize • Creating a calming corner for children to "self-regulate"
	Creating a positive classroom environment	• Taking note of educator's suspension practice and enrollment • Developing restorative disciplinary practices • Avoid excluding students from classroom activities

5.2 Early Educator-Child

What will ensure that the relationship between the early educator and child is supported in ways that ensure the well-being of the child? What supports are most needed to ensure a high quality of child care? We created this section to be separate from the Child First Care section so that we could focus on what the early educator needs in order for their relationship with the child to be successful. This section addresses the ecosystem in which the early learning sector lives, and the needs of the professional at large. It is further acknowledged that the needs of the educators and program leaders must be met before they can be expected to meet the needs of all children. However, we recognize that these are "big lifts" and often intersecting issues. There are no early solutions or "low hanging fruit" here. The perspectives shared here are reflective also of national research and previous Oregon-based research, and have been integrated into strategies in *Growing Oregon Together*, the design of Every Child Belongs, and several national efforts. But, we remind readers that all of the relational modalities discussed in this report contribute to the early educator's ability and capacity to provide relationship-based care that is rooted in anti-bias anti-racist practices.

Early educators shared that the challenges they face with providing the kind of quality care that they would like come down to limited personal and professional capacity. Personally, early educators feel a great deal of stress from working long hours, caring for children with big behaviors, and not having connections with other early educators with shared experiences – this is especially true for home-based early educators.

> *"I know a lot of child care [early educators] need mental health for themselves and that's hard, especially when you're working 60 hours a week and have no backup."*

Professionally, early educators desire more staff capacity and many struggle with high staff turnover. Furthermore, early educators find it more challenging to set the conditions for success, especially for children with big behaviors, when teacher-child ratios are high. Early educators also expressed strong desires for professional development and continuing education training, particularly about early childhood behaviors and supporting children with disabilities.

From early educators we learned that the following three elements are essential for supporting the early educator-child relationship:

1. Wellness supports
2. Increased staff capacity
3. Child-care centered training

Wellness Supports

Early educators recognize that when they are able to get their mental health care needs met, they are able to better care for children in their programs. However, social norms tend to undermine the amount of labor and levels of stress that child care early educators experience. These norms presume that feminized work, like child care, is far less labor intensive than other, more masculinized work forms of work.

However, early educators shared that the day-to-day labor that is required of child care early educators is immense. They are under tremendous stress and working over capacity; it is not uncommon for early educators to work between 60 and 100 hours per week. The stress is amplified when caring for children with big or challenging behaviors. Early educators have reported being exposed to physical harm when children have outbursts. During these tense moments, early educators must also be able to de-escalate the situation so that other children are safe. Further, early educators often do all this labor with limited staff support. Family child care early educators, in particular, also experience isolation and a lack of connection with other early educators. If these stressors remain unaddressed, it is not difficult to understand that when early educators are over-worked and burnt-out, their ability to be in relationship with children in their care is also diminished.

> *"I need to make sure that I'm regulated before I can deal with a kid with a frustrating moment; asking open-ended questions, asking if they feel safe, doing playful moments. I will not get offended when a child has a big moment."*

> *"I would benefit from a support network of other child care [early educators] who face similar challenges. Sharing experiences and strategies with peers would help me feel less isolated in handling difficult situations and give me new ideas for addressing challenges."*

We learned from early educators about approaches to supporting their mental health:

Preventing Burn-out. Early educators typically work more than 40 hours per week. They are often doing multiple types of work: caring for children, managing big behaviors, maintaining relationships with families, doing administrative work and filling out assessments, meal planning, meeting with specialists, cleaning shared spaces, attending professional development trainings.

> *"I would take some time off for selfcare. Being a child care [early educators] can be stressful, and it's easy to forget to take care of myself. Having time to relax, recharge, and engage in activities that help me manage stress would make me a better early educator for the children."*

To balance the stress of this intense work, early educators practice burn-out prevention in the following ways:

- Planning and accommodating for breaks during the day
- Taking time outside work to recharge and relax
- Incorporating playful, joyful, and fun activities with the children

Professional connections. With so much of the work-day spent with children, early educators expressed the need to build and maintain professional connections. These kinds of connections go a long way in supporting the mental health of early educators – especially home-based early educators who experience isolation – as well as building a community of practice for opportunities to exchange knowledge, access resources, and gain skills. To support these needs, local Focus Child Care Networks, learning cohorts, Community of Practices and coaching are provided through Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies.

> *"[Early educators] need a strong community of support to prevent having to remove children with special needs from their programs. This includes access to professional networks, peer mentorship, shared resources, and collaborative partnerships with specialists and families. A supportive community can provide guidance, emotional support, and practical solutions for managing challenging situations. With access to these resources, [early educators] can feel confident in their ability to meet the needs of every child, reduce burnout, and create a more inclusive environment where all children are given the chance to succeed and grow."*

Professional connections that are critical for early educators include:

- Peer-to-peer opportunities to meet and socialize
- Coaches and mentors
- Humans who can connect early educators with resources

Increased Staff Capacity

By far, the most widely stated need is more staff. This is especially true when caring for children with big or challenging behaviors, because a lot of staff capacity can go into this more specialized care. The reality of working with young children, and particularly in small settings or family child care programs, is that there is a lack of support. Often, workforce shortages additionally translate into poor staff management practices that impact early educators.

However, it should be noted that the shortage of early educators is a national issue and not exclusive to Oregon or even just one region of our state. Workforce development continues to be a primary need for many reasons, even beyond the ones shared in this report. In Oregon, the 2024 Oregon Talent Assessment found that Oregon child child care industry "faces several challenges, including high costs, low pay, limited availability of quality care, and workforce shortages." Oregon lost 16% of our child care workforce between 2018 and 2023; thus, "increasing the child care workforce will require several strategies including increasing wages, demonstrating and strengthening career pathways, and expanding the labor pool by addressing barriers to job access."

> *"If you don't have staff then you cannot even take care of yourself. You can't get away. You can't afford to."*

> *"If I could afford to have extra staff for those kids [with challenging behaviors], I would take them on. But the way the business is now I can't afford to have an extra staff, just for that child. If I could afford it, I'd probably do it."*

Early educators identified several approaches to increase staff capacity:

Dedicated staff. Early educators expressed a need for more staff who have the experience and skills to work with children with big or challenging behaviors.

Workforce pathways. Early educators expressed the need for skilled workers who are committed to make this line of work a career.

> *"I would love to have competent co-workers and assistants that aren't just fresh out of high school, who do not have a work ethnic or commitment to their work. I need a partner who wants to work."*

Examples in support of this approach include:

- Degree pathways for early learning that are introduced in middle and high school
- Continued education trainings for the early learning workforce

State and Federal funding. Early educators shared the need for additional funding from State and Federal sources to increase staff capacity.

Examples that were shared include:

- Additional ERDC funds to support more staffing
- Early intervention programs that provide hourly support staff

Professional Development for Early Educators

Early educators desire more training to complement

their experiential knowledge as well as learn applied approaches and methods for early care contexts. They identified two main gaps in available training and educational resources: (1) How to identify and support children with disabilities and (2) how to appropriately and effectively meet the behavioral and emotional needs of children in their care.

> *"Staff have very minimal to no training when it comes to children who have higher needs, whether it's behaviors etc. Rather than working with them, and trying to problem solve and troubleshoot, it's just timeout or you need to leave the class or you need to leave the area. It doesn't solve anything and it doesn't eliminate the problem."*

> *"Certified teachers don't really know how to handle challenging behaviors so they just call the principal or send them to the office – they don't know how to create the bond to really connect with the children."*

Furthermore, early educators felt that what is currently offered is not very responsive to what is needed to prevent suspension and expulsion. The training that does exist, such as ORO special needs training, are basic and rarely updated, or are expensive and not well advertised.

> *"I've participated in a few workshops on inclusive education and trauma-informed care, which were incredibly valuable. However, these opportunities were often limited or short-term, and I wish they had been more consistent and in-depth."*

> *"I believe we tried everything but at some point – we're not qualified therapists. I don't have the knowledge. So yeah, I think [we'd benefit] if we had knowledge of psychology or trauma."*

> *"When a situation becomes physical, what if it was to an employee or one of the kids? What am I supposed to do? Parents are not going to be happy with their child getting hurt. [I need to] have the correct training on what to do when something like that happens. How to not get blamed, what is the proper way of holding them, what is the procedure?"*

Professional development for early educators would significantly improve the classroom environment and contribute to the needed skills to prevent suspension and expulsion.Every Child Belongs has required a focus on training and technical assistance for programs. This includes both foundational professional development and more targeted support when a specific challenge arises. This training and technical assistance may include coaching and consultation, as we know that training alone is not supportive to adult learning.

> *"Classes [would be helpful] on referrals, common strategies, and useful items such as small weighted blankets, tactile sit spots, knowledge about the different types of programs and interventions available."*

Participants expressed ideas for a variety of professional learning topics. Some of these are already

addressed in current offerings, which indicates a need for additional understanding of access and awareness on a local level.

Prevention

- Recognizing the early signs of big behaviors
- Trauma-informed care and adverse childhood experiences
- Social and emotional learning for curriculum development
- Growth mindset
- Avoiding burn out

Addressing big behaviors

- Using physical restraint: Rules, liability, and guidance
- Understanding and addressing aggression
- Guidance on de-escalation strategies
- Strategies for self-regulation
- Age-appropriate responses

Responsive environments

- Creating flexible classroom schedules and activities
- Creating different sensory and movement spaces
- Developing curricula

Disability

- Specialized workshops and classes on autism and ADHD
- How to judge whether a child has developmental delay or signs of a larger disability
- Evaluating infants and toddlers for disabilities
- Understanding the signs and supports for children who are neurodivergent

Table 19. Summary early educator-child elements

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Wellness support	Preventing burn-out	• Planning breaks during the day • Taking time outside work to recharge and relax • Incorporating playful, joyful, and fun activities with the children
	Professional connections	• Peer-to-peer opportunities to meet and socialize • Coaches and mentors • Humans who can connect educators with resources
Increased staff capacity	Dedicated staff	• Staff with skills to work with children with big or challenging behaviors
	State and Federal funding	• Additional ERDC funds to support more staffing • Early intervention programs that provide hourly support staff
	Workforce pathways	• Degree pathways for early learning that are introduced in middle and high school • Continued education trainings for the early learning workforce
Professional development for early educators	Prevention	• Recognizing the early signs of big behaviors • Trauma-informed care and adverse childhood experiences • Social and emotional learning for curriculum development
	Addressing big behaviors	• Using physical restraint: Rules, liability, and guidance • Understanding and addressing aggression • Guidance on de-escalation strategies
	Responsive environments	• Creating flexible classroom schedules and activities • Creating different sensory and movement spaces
	Disability	• Specialized workshops and classes on autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) • How to judge whether a child has developmental delay or signs of a larger disability • Evaluating infants and toddlers for disabilities

5.3 Early Educator-Families

The second modality to preventing suspension and expulsion focuses on early educators' relationships with families. During an interview, one early educator expressed just how important families are to ensuring that early educators are set up to deliver quality care: "If there's no support from the family, then no matter how many different strategies you try, it's hard to care for kids especially when they show big behaviors."

Another early educator shared how maintaining a good relationship with families is, in itself, a necessary support for early educators: "If the parents are not on board, that causes an issue because you can't get the support you need. If the parents aren't on board, you're not getting anything done."

Fostering and maintaining relationships with families is fundamental to supporting efforts to provide child first care and, therefore, creating the conditions to prevent suspension and expulsion.

We learned from early educators the three most important elements for supporting their relationships to families. They are:

1. Curiosity
2. Diverse Interactions
3. Collaboration

Curiosity

When early educators shared their experiences of successfully fostering relationships with families, what emerged, first and foremost, was the need for them to be curious about the child's family context. Not all early educators excel at this, but it is something that can be shared and learned, especially when there are opportunities for early educators to meet with each other (the importance of the early educator-early educator relationship is discussed next).

> *"Teachers are not really asking meaningful questions to the kiddos or the families – more information from the parents helps understand the kid's contexts or what does and doesn't work for their kids."*

Early educators offered some approaches that can support their relationships with families:

Meaningful questions. Being curious is fundamentally about asking questions. But not all questions are good or appropriate to ask. We heard from early educators the kinds of questions they ask when meeting with families, including:

- What does and doesn't work for children
- What challenges do children experience at home
- What routines have been established at home (e.g., sleep, potty, meals)
- What strategies do families use when children show big behaviors
- What kinds of support do families qualify for
- Details about family background, such as experiences with or exposure to:
- Trauma
- Homelessness
- Housing and food insecurity
- Incarcerated family members
- Domestic abuse
- Mental health issues and diagnosis
- Loss of family members
- Family separation or divorce

Formal and informal engagement methods. Being intentional about how to engage families about their children is key to fostering good relationships. Some kinds of inquiry can feel intrusive or overly bureaucratic, while others can be less formal. Early educators shared the range of methods they use to ensure they are equipped with useful information about the children in the program. These methods include:

- Assessments
- Interviews

- Informal conversations
- Family visits to child care settings (e.g., homes, centers)
- Family surveys and feedback

Diverse Interactions

Early educators rely on diverse ways to interact with and inform families about their children's needs, challenges, and success. Fostering and maintaining relationships with families is about learning to meet them where they are at and introducing flexibility and adaptability. Supporting diverse interactions with families ensures that relationality – and the multiple forms of communication this can entail – drives the well-being of the child.

> *"We create an environment that eases the child into our center from their home."*

> *"I give [parents] the bienvenida and invite them to be a part of classroom activities, read books, and share activities with the class."*

Early educators shared the multiple ways in which they interact with families; from what they shared, we've identified four approaches for supporting diverse interactions:

Welcoming environment. Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment signals to families that their children will be safe and cared for. It also signals and affirms that the early educator is a trusted care-taker. Early educators accomplish this by inviting families to participate in, engage with, and learn about the child care setting; by demonstrating attentiveness to the child; and by approaching families in a warm and friendly manner.

> *"I meet the parents, I greet them each morning. And then I greet them when they arrive to pick up their children. So when they're coming in they can tell me, Johnny didn't sleep very well last night. Do you think it's okay if he can lay down or can he have a nap today? I'm like, sure. Or Susie needs this, and so I'm always available to them so they can let me know. Then we message each other. I'll do a lot of texting and so I send pictures of the children throughout the day or throughout the week."*

Examples of creating an inclusive environment include:

- Inviting families to an orientation of the child care setting during the intake process
- Inviting families to participate in the creation of the curriculum or provide feedback on it
- Sharing something small about the child that the early educator paid attention to and noticed
- Greeting families everyday
- Having conversations with family members at pick up and drop off

Technology. Using technology as a medium for staying in contact with and communicating with families ensures they are informed about the day-to-day experiences of their children. This also facilitates building trust with families.

For example, early educators rely on:

- Apps to post information about the curriculum
- Texting photos
- Using digital calendars to post reminders, events, and schedules
- Direct phone calls

Visual information. Posting easily digestible visual information about day-to-day activities and routines can keep families informed in an accessible

way. This can be especially helpful for early educators with limited capacity.

Helpful visual information that early educators post includes:

- The day's food menu
- Reminders about upcoming events
- Schedules

Celebration. Cultivating an appreciation and desire for learning about family and community traditions goes a long way in building strong relationships. Early educators shared the importance of celebrating different traditions by hosting interactive activities that invite families to participate.

> *"I really get to know families. What is their family culture like? What do they like to do for fun? How can I help their child to feel comfortable here? And then just using little things like recipes. We had a mom who brought in this recipe that they love to make as a family, and I'm like, hey, can I have that recipe so we can make that here? Just little things like that, I think are good relationship builder tools...I had one parent come in and read a book. There they were bilingual. And so I had a parent come in and read a book in Spanish to our group."*

Early educators shared examples of events and activities they've hosted:

- Community harvest under a full moon
- Family socials where everyone brings a cultural dish
- Winter party with Christmas and Solstice traditions included

Collaboration

A strong early educator-family relationship depends on collaboration, especially when figuring out the best course of action for children expressing big or challenging behaviors. This depends, first and foremost, on having a trusting relationship between early educator and families. The early educator needs to be honest and forthright about when they can't provide the kind of care that's needed; families need to be open and willing to work with early educators to find solutions. Both parties must also recognize that an effective collaboration could mean seeking out support and solutions beyond the child care setting.

> *"I establish that we are a team, we need the same language, visual cards or timers; [we] have to be in alignment in how we are saying and doing these things."*

> *"We try to construct a team, and we ask parents for support. We ask them what works for them, and we show them what works for us, and we expand that in both spaces. We want kids to regulate in all the same spaces and are prepared to learn and coexist."*

Approaches to support effective collaboration between early educators and families include:

Information sharing.Early educators work to keep families informed about their children in the classroom. Early educators shared the importance of being on the same page with families. Information sharing between families and early educators helps manage big or challenging behaviors in the classroom. In addition, communication builds consensus among families and early educators, aiding in implementing IFSP plans and acclimatizing children to the classroom.

> *"We share and have training for the parents. We even reimburse them for training or classes at universities and programs."*

> *"Parent coaching is needed. We need to fill a gap and make coaching readily available. We need a school for parents. It would be beneficial for the whole community. Parents need to meet other parents. Our work alone is not enough to fill that."*

Early educators maintain consistent communication with families by:

- Providing a space for early educators and families to exchange information so that strategies in the home and in the child care setting complement each other
- Working with families to ensure that the child's transition from home to child care setting is smooth. This can be done by having familiar pictures nearby, sharing language, and providing culturally appropriate foods
- Making sure that the child's routines are consistent at the home and in the child care setting
- Sharing available parental trainings with caregivers and helping prepare them to be their child's advocate

Resolution processes. Early educators work to establish plans for resolutions with families. This means having a mutual understanding of expectations in the classroom; having clear policies and procedures for collaborative decision-making and boundary setting; processes for engaging in tough conversations. When conflict or tension cannot be addressed between the early educators and families, early educators have worked with third parties – directors of child care centers, specialists, or trusted community members – to help with mediation.

Table 20. Summary early educator-family elements

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Curiosity	Meaningful questions	• What does and doesn't work for children • What challenges do children experience at home • What routines have been established at home
	Formal and informal engagement methods	• Assessments • Interviews • Informal conversations
Diverse interactions	Welcoming environment	• Inviting families to an orientation of the child care setting • Inviting families to participate in the creation of the curriculum or provide feedback on it • Sharing something small about the child that the educator paid attention to and noticed

(cont.) Table 20. Summary early educator-family elements

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Diverse interactions	Technology	• Apps to post information about the curriculum • Texting photos • Using digital calendars to post reminders, events, and schedules
	Visual information	• The day's food menu • Reminders about upcoming events • Schedules
	Celebration	• Community harvest under a full moon • Family socials where everyone brings a cultural dish • Winter party with Christmas and Solstice traditions included
Collaboration	Information sharing	• Ensuring strategies in the home and in the child care setting complement each other • Sharing parental training resources • Ensuring the child's transition from home to child care setting is smooth
	Resolution processes	• Clear policies and procedures for collaborative decision-making and boundary setting • Processes for engaging in tough conversations • Inviting third party mediation when necessary

5.4 Early Educator-Early Educator

The third relational modality is centered on relationships between early educators. We learned that early educators overwhelmingly desire and, if possible, seek out connection with other early educators. However, opportunities to connect are not typically accessible or are underdeveloped.

> *"I see folks entering and not being supported and just leaving because the demand is too high."*

This is an area that is ripe for needing support, and one that is often overlooked as essential for preventing suspension and expulsion. It is well-recognized that professional peer connections foster exchange of ideas and shared learnings, but they also have positive impacts on mental health through the power of being in community with people who have similar lived experiences.

> *"I would benefit from a support network of other child care early educators who face similar challenges. Sharing experiences and strategies with peers would help me feel less isolated in handling difficult situations and give me new ideas for addressing challenges."*

To elaborate on this modality, and what early educators deem to be the most salient approaches to support it, we have distinguished two kinds of early educator-early educator relationships: (1) peer-to-peer and (2) early educator-manager.

Peer-to-Peer

We start with relationships that early educators have, or desire to have, with their professional peers. These relationships may be fostered with mutuals in a workspace or outside it. They are characterized by a spirit of collegiality and camaraderie, rather than one where there is a power differential.

Peer-to-peer relationships are important for building a trusting community of practice where peers can share experiences, exchange knowledge and learning, and offer social and emotional support. This can help with experiences of isolation that many early educators, especially home-based ones, encounter on a daily basis.

> *"[Social media groups] are where folks are talking, sharing, and communicating: 'I have this situation and what should I do here?'"*

Early educators expressed frustration about being told what to do by early learning professionals or specialists who are meant to help them, but, in fact, have far less experience than them. Early educators shared that, in their experience, the proposed "gold standard" approaches do not work. Many early educators desire to build on their decades long experience by learning from peers and sharing their learnings with their mutuals. In addition, peer-to-peer connections are important because early educators feel seen and validated when in the company of their peers. Furthermore, these opportunities engender learning about effective child care strategies.

> *"Even just the networking that happens naturally or just hearing personal experiences from other [early educators] can be really beneficial too if you're like, I've had that problem and they're having that problem too. Okay, I should change the way I'm doing this or I should give more attention to this."*

> *"I learned a lot from the folks I worked with and taught with. In the same focus group, two early educators were in a mentor and mentee relationship. While they were both part of a larger Facebook group, the mentee seeks direct support from the early educator who has twenty years of experience."*

We learned that there are two main elements that are essential for establishing and supporting peer to-peer communities of practice:

1. Community-directed connection
2. State-supported connection

Community-Directed Connection

> *"[Early educators] need a strong community of support to prevent having to remove children with special needs from their programs. This includes access to professional networks, peer mentorship, shared resources, and collaborative partnerships with specialists and families. A supportive community can provide guidance, emotional support, and practical solutions for managing challenging situations. With access to these resources, [early educators] can feel confident in their ability to meet the needs of every child, reduce burnout,*

> *and create a more inclusive environment where all children are given the chance to succeed and grow."*

Early educators shared successful efforts to voluntarily organize a community of peers. These approaches include:

Online forums. Social media platforms, like Facebook and Pinterest, are spaces where early educators find community to share experiences and learn from each other.

Mutual aid. In the absence of accessible services and resources, especially those that are culturally and linguistically specific, early educators have resorted to researching and compiling them to share with others. We also learned about the creation of resources forums where early educators gather in person to learn about available resources from the State, County, and locally.

Networking. Early educators look to formal learning opportunities, like workshops and courses, to network with other early educators. They also organize local social events for local early educators.

State-Supported Connection

Government agencies, like DELC, are viewed as important connectors for early educators. We learned that early educators desire more coordinated efforts from the State to share resources and create opportunities for local, regional, and statewide connection. Approaches to State-supported connection include:

Funding. Targeted funds are needed to establish networking events for early educators who may not otherwise have opportunities to meet. Funding for mentorship programs is also desired.

Coordinating information. Early educators expressed desires to connect with peer coaches, mentors, and other early educators from across the state. Creating a centralized registry of early educators was shared as a potentially helpful way the State can support peer-to-peer relationships.

Early Educator-Manager

These relationships are largely situated in the workplace. They may not be applicable to small homebased child care settings. The early educator-manager relationship is between early educators, whose primary role is to be in the classroom or learning setting with children, and managers, who are more removed from the classroom and spend a significant part of their time on administrative and supervisory work.

> *"I was in survival mode..I was just trying to survive. If I would have had consistent support from my director and a livable wage, adequate breaks, and time off; [if they] would have honored my way – clearly my director is also burned out. I didn't feel valued, even if the families valued me."*

> *"The schools shouldn't create policies that don't protect teachers – okay, we are going to talk and this is how we do it – you need to respect the teacher just like we ask the kids to respect us."*

These relationships are embedded within hierarchical dynamics, with managers often having more decision-making power that can butt up against the knowledge, desires, and experiences of the early educator. Therefore, the most important element for ensuring the success of this relationship is shared decision-making.

Shared Decision-Making

The most important intervention within workplace

relationships is to ensure that decision-making is shared between early educators and managers. Power-sharing is critical in order to ensure that Child First Care is delivered.

Early educators shared two key approaches to shared decision-making:

Valuing early educator knowledge. Managers must respect and support the work and experience early educators by recognizing that they provide essential, frontline care and services; they often have strong rapport with families and children; and they bring informed and creative solutions to ensure that children, especially with big behaviors, are appropriately cared for.

Feedback loops. There are several examples of how managers can establish effective feedback loops with early educators:

- Decisions about whether a child is a good "fit" are made collaboratively, rather than solely a manager level decision
- Co-constructing policies that demonstrate respect for early educator experiences and knowledge
- Setting the tone of the workplace with adequate feedback from early educators

Table 21. Summary of early educator-early educator elements

Peer-to-Peer

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Community-Directed Connection	Online forums	• Facebook • Pinterest
	Mutual aid	• Compiling culturally and linguistically specific resources and services • Resource forums
	Networking	• Opportunities at professional workshops and classes • Social events
State-Supported Connection	Funding	• Networking • Mentorship programs
	Coordinated information	• Statewide connections to peers, mentors, coaches • Centralized registry of educators

Early Educator-Manager

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Shared Decision-Making	Valuing educator knowledge	• Recognizing educator experience and relationships with families • Knowledge of creating solutions
	Feedback loops	• Collaboration regarding decisions impacting children • Co-constructing workplace policies

5.5 Early Educator-Specialist

Early educators who work with specialists understand what works for the children in their care and what doesn't. They also have insight into what makes a good specialist and how specialist visits can be more effective. Cultivating a strong relationship between early educator and specialist is essential for preventing suspension and expulsion because big or challenging behaviors are often recognized and addressed through this relationship. Furthermore, a strong early educator-specialist relationship ensures that the early educator is equipped to best care for children and to work with parents and families to ensure a high quality of care.

> *"I need more people who are well trained in these things to spend more than just a few hours per week working with kids or coaching my staff."*

At the core of a healthy early educator-specialist relationship is establishing clear channels of communication so that the child's needs and well-being are properly understood and addressed. Mutual respect, action-oriented partnerships, and dedicated time in the classroom are also key for producing a good early educator-specialist relationship. Across interviews, early educators shared their what they desire for their relationships with specialists:

> *"Clear communication channels with local mental health professionals or pediatricians would be crucial. Being able to consult with these professionals when needed would help me ensure we are providing the right interventions and support for each child."*

> *"It doesn't build healthy relationships with someone if you tell me what to do. Show me what to do instead, we need more modeling."*

How can this relationship be best supported? We learned from early educators that the two main elements that engender a strong early educator-specialist relationship are:

1. Collaborative dynamic
2. Responsive specialist capacity

Collaborative Dynamic

Not all teams collaborate well, and early educators shared the many challenges and successes of working with specialists. We learned from early educators about two important approaches to effective collaboration that support their relationship with specialists.

Alleviating classroom burden. Specialists are uniquely positioned to help support children and early educators; centering the needs of both is necessary. Early educators indicated they need specialists who are actively supportive in the classroom. This requires specialists to be consistently communicating with early educators on their observations and helping with tasks. Early educators have limited capacity, and they desire specialists who understand this and can offer support that is considerate of this context.

> *"Specialists [should] not put barriers on us to bring us more problems, but someone who can really support our program and family to help us support the kiddos."*

A specialist can honor early educator capacity by:

- Arriving on time
- Providing hands-on support
- Providing on-the-job training

- Sharing observations and learnings with the early educator
- Assisting in the completion of diagnostics paperwork

Providing holistic strategies. Interactions with specialists should result in the early educator having the necessary tools and strategies to continue caring for the child when the specialist leaves. Early educators need these strategies to be modeled in the classroom to effectively implement them. Additionally, specialists who offer strategies that apply to all children increase the effectiveness of the classroom.

> *"Clear communication channels with local mental health professionals or pediatricians would be crucial. Being able to consult with these professionals when needed would help me ensure we are providing the right interventions and support for each child."*

Early educators shared examples of these effective strategies, including:

- Familiarity with children through casual or informal interactions
- Valuing and learning from early educator knowledge about the children in their care
- Offering strategies for the full spectrum of big behaviors
- Co-designing solutions with early educators

Responsive Specialist Capacity

Having any support in the classroom is valuable, but when that support also provides strategies that increase the inclusivity and functionality of the classroom, it is greatly appreciated by early educators. However, not all specialists are equipped with the tools and capacity to respond to the needs of early educators and children.

> *"[Specialists] Have to be willing to be flexible, assess the situation each day, and adjust. Some peers and specialists are not good at this."*

We learned from early educators about approaches that would lead to more responsive specialist capacity and, ultimately, stronger early educator-specialists relationships.

Increasing time with specialists. Early educators desire specialists who deeply understand the children's needs and provide holistic solutions to challenges. However, this level of support requires time and consistency of visits. Currently, early educators have minimal access to specialists. Making it challenging to receive the adequate support needed by early educators and children.

> *"If even you don't know the triggers or how the kiddo controls their feelings, what good is a specialist coming in for 30 minutes? Also, it's more unfamiliar faces and stressful situations. The kiddo could think, why am I separated from the group? Do the parents have a say? Are they going to be present at the sessions? It could work if it's consistently scheduled."*

Early educators shared their perspectives on what would make specialists more effective:

- More consistent and frequent visits
- As-needed consultations with specialists
- Debriefs with early educators after visits
- Communicating and sharing resources to early educators

Additional training for specialists. Early educators desire specialists who lessen the classroom burden and are incorporated into the classroom instead of bystanders. This means becoming familiar with children and modeling strategies to address challenges in the classroom in real-time. Receiving this level of support from specialists is rare, and many specialists lack the necessary experience.

> *"We were fortunate to have a specialist come after-hours and lead staff training. Since she was [an early educator] with current students in the building, she was able to give help in realistic ways to support students and teachers. I have had only one offer to do this in 20 + years in early childhood."*

> *"I need help on the ground. I'm in the classroom forty hours per week providing supervision, care, and education. I need a special Ed person on the ground modeling and giving me a hand with kids that have special needs."*

According to early educators, specialists need more training and experience in these areas:

- Mentorship and coaching
- Modeling strategies for early educators
- More experience in a classroom setting
- Experience working with multicultural communities

Table 22. Summary of early educator-specialist elements

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Collaborative dynamic	Alleviating classroom burden	• Providing hands-on support • Sharing observations and learnings with the educator • Assisting in the completion of diagnostics paperwork
	Providing holistic strategies	• Familiarity with children through casual or informal interactions • Valuing and learning from educator knowledge about the children in their care • Offering strategies for the full spectrum of big behaviors • Co-designing solutions with educators
Responsive specialist capacity	Increasing time with specialists	• More consistent and frequent visits • As-needed consultations with specialists • Debriefs with educators after visits • Communicating and sharing resources to educators
	Additional training for specialists	• Mentorship and coaching • Modeling strategies for educators • More experience in a classroom setting • Experience working with multicultural communities

5.6 Early Educator-Dominant Systems

Early educators work closely with Federal, State, regional, and local government agencies. These agencies allocate funding, monitor compliance, refer children, and provide resources to early educators. Therefore, early educators are often locked into engaging with large and powerful bureaucratic systems. A few early educators we heard from offered high praise for their local and state level support, while the majority of others often feel uninformed, overburdened, and unsupported.

> *"The ban is written in a way that feels like you have to be everything to everyone, like a public school. But that's impossible"*

> *"I need more clarity about what is needed for the process. It's just not possible for us to do this without one-on-one care, especially knowing what legal retributions are on us"*

> *"State needs to provide alternative, support the needs of the children in those programs; if child needs medical care and require extra things, there needs to be someone in place or funding to bring on a second person to help that child; if child can't be left alone with other kids, need capacity for one-on-one; be ready to provide people that are specialized about behaviors, education, funding"*

The universe of dominant institutions a single child care early educator must engage with can be daunting. These sentiments are generally how early educators felt, expressing frustration with how often they must be responsive to the State, many different supports and humans they must engage with to support their needs, and the limited guidance and support to stay in compliance with laws, policies, and regulations. Even when early educators can stay on top of all the people they need to engage and laws and policies they need to follow, they often feel like the right kind of help is not available to them to keep children in their programs.

> *"I have someone come in for 30 minutes every other month. In a year and a half the 3 year old I have in care has made 0 progress. I have expressed concerns to the specialist but so far, no change"*

> *"Every six months they do an inspection – the person should have your record – finger printing is every five years, we shouldn't have to do these things every 6 months"*

How can dominant systems support early educators so they can be more successful at keeping children in care and refraining from suspensions and expulsion? Our analysis pointed to three key elements about guidance and support from dominant systems needed for early educators to have more knowledge, capacity, resources, and training to keep children in programs and their businesses open.

1. Understanding the prohibition of suspension and expulsion
2. Relieving administrative burden and addressing inefficiencies
3. Professionalization of the workforce

Next, we describe each of these elements of early educator-dominant system relations in detail.

Understanding the Prohibition of Suspension and Expulsion

Many early educators were unsure about what suspension and expulsion actually is, how to avoid it, and how to communicate to families around it. They were frustrated with limited written materials as their main resource and desired specific information and training about how to avoid suspension and expulsion and stay in compliance with the new law.

> *"Because there are so many voices telling us one thing and then another, we need clear and concrete information. We need good Q&A, since we ask a lot of questions. We need ample time to ask all of our questions and claim to hold on to the last questions. We understand in different ways and sometimes we will repeat the questions. Please be patient and calm with us so we have time to digest and understand it all"*

From early educators we learned about a variety of approaches to establishing an understanding of suspension and expulsion and applying inclusion. These include:

Importance of eliminating 0-5 suspension and expulsion. Regardless if early educators agreed (most did) or disagreed with the upcoming prohibition on suspension and expulsion, most did not understand the importance of eliminating suspensions and expulsions at a statewide level. Of the early educators we engaged, the majority have either never suspended or expelled a child or only have once or twice over the course of decades of care. Further, early educators had almost no understanding of the disproportionate impact of suspension and expulsion on Black, brown, disabled, or English language learners.

Understanding what constitutes 0-5 suspension and expulsion in detail, their differences, possibility of soft expulsion practices, and their alternatives is an important approach to helping early educators get on board with the prohibition. Further, many early educators were in denial that suspension and expulsions were happening on a large scale and felt very concerned with why the state would introduce such a law which feels like an infringement of unnecessary regulation on their private business.

> *"This is my business, why do I have to keep children that are being violent to other kids, making everybody crazy"*

> *"We are a private business, why are we so regulated?"*

To alleviate these issues, it is critical to provide meaningful information that describes how the law came about, why prohibition is important, who is affected and how, and if it is possible to modify the policy or consider a slow ramp up to it based on differences between populous and rural areas or public, nonprofit, and for-profit agencies.

The state can address early educators lack of understanding and concerns around the prohibition by:

- Detailing what constitutes 0-5 suspension and expulsion
- Alleviating denial and concern through knowing more about

Clarity on rules to follow to prevent suspension and expulsion. Many of the early educators simply asked to have clarity on the rules. What is expected of me? What can and can't I do? What will happen if I cannot get the support I need? Without these pieces in place, early educators felt the law was premature and state unable to uphold it.

> *"Repeal the law. It's too vague, timelines to provide resources are already behind schedule, and early educators have been given no guidance as to how to follow the law or what resources are currently available."*

Some ways to address these concerns are to be clear about prohibition policies, procedures, and expectations. Offer early educators and all other ECE professionals and families regular and consistent communication. This cannot be a one time offering. What are the codes of conduct and expectations so that early educators, other ECE professionals and families are clear about the rules to be followed in the care facility. The State should provide tips to prepare for the prohibition, handbooks that clearly state the language of the prohibition, and a documentation process for addressing children with big behaviors or other physical, mental, and emotional health needs. These should cover when and how to write up an Early Intervention Program (EIP), engage the IFSP process, which resources cover what costs, and provide training so early educators know to what extent they are liable and at what point? Checklists, scripts, and formal processes would be helpful for early educators to share with families when meeting with them so that they can work together to address issues. What expectations or rules will be imposed on families? When is enough and the child needs to find new care? Can children transfer to other programs that are more appropriate for them? Early educators want to know that the State acknowledges the gray areas and offers guidance on how to proceed. They also worry about what implications the prohibition will have on their insurance. What kinds of due diligence should they engage to avoid penalty or punishment? Also, wow will the State or region be accountable if the problem is a lack of support or formal observation from them and not the early educator?

Relieving Administrative Burden and Addressing Inefficiencies

Early educators expressed their frustrations with administrative burdens and inefficiency of many systems and asked for the State to instead create more opportunities for success. Early educators feel bogged down by paper work, requirements, and frequent recertifications. They also expressed deep frustration with inconsistent and often unreliable resources and support and struggled with managing all of these contacts and offices meant to support them. These issues are especially challenging for early educators whose English is their second language and are older adults, needing much more support with language and technical assistance.

> *"I have to fill out a report when I've held a kid, how can I do this when I had to do it 15 times in a classroom, it's wild"*

> *"License every year, if we have no infraction for the first year of license can we make it every other year – it's expensive and takes so much time"*

> *"I have so many coaches I get confused about where they come from. They [CC&R and PFA site visit] are helpful and I am grateful, but it's a lot of people coming in and out; Just one person would be amazing."*

From early educators we learned about a variety of approaches to relieve administrative burden so they can focus on providing excellent care to all the children in their program and attention to those that need extra support. These include:

Intact systems and availability of resources. Early educators expressed a lot of frustrations with how fragmented child care systems are and outdated and unreliable resources. They want intact systems and clear availability of resources to meet the diverse needs of children and families. They expressed frustration with the delayed WARM line, and desired more accessible and readily available resources, data, and tools that help track progress and availability of resources. Realistically, what services are currently available, and what are the back up plans when a specialist or other formal supports call out, no show, or don't return phone calls. They want to know that there is someone who can actually help them with their needs.

> *"There's got to be more people out there that have those resources that can share them. I mean, I could come up with a million ideas like, Hey, let's get somebody from Head Start to be a mentor towards child care early educators. I mean, just anything like that people with the experience and knowledge to share that information"*

> *"the other day with someone from the Oregon Child Care Alliance. And they mentioned that neighbor impact actually has a contact person who you can speak with if you have a child that you're having behavioral issues with or even if you are just having difficulty with the parent or the family that they will come and actually be present and help you kind of talk with them or work out whatever the issue is. And I had no idea that that was a resource being offered. It was like, that's a thing. They will come help you with this, I mean, wouldn't have known to ask if, so some things like that. It's like, I guess there are some resources out there for people to try and figure this out. We just need to know that they're there."*

Early educators asked for technological tools and platforms for tracking progress, managing individualized plans, and maintaining clear communication with families and specialists. They asked for free resources, sensory materials, updated/modern behavioral charts, learning activities, and software that helps track progress and manage classroom behaviors.

Language and technical support, training, and assistance with paperwork. While many early educators asked for more support with technology, we especially hear the need for this support from non-English-speaking early educators and early educators who are English language learners. This creates delays and challenges in student enrollment in programs and benefiting from available resources. Early educators asked for expanding resources in languages other than the five main ones supported by DELC and offering one-on-one, after hour/early morning technical assistance to explain and help with filling out paper work and uploading them to the correct portals. Many older early educators don't have the technological skills to secure funding support (e.g., USDA program) or to upload things into ORO.

Minimizing the burden and frequency of requirements and paperwork. Early educators were clear that there are too many requirements on them too often, and that this keeps some of them from focusing on the care needed in their centers. While they understand the importance of system and programmatic requirements, they feel the State can minimize these so it takes less time less often to stay in compliance. Feedback suggested less inspections less often for licensing for those with a good record

– not every 6 months, maybe every other year if no infractions that year, or every three years if certain qualifications were previously met, acknowledging state and federal requirements vary. Minimizing the length of inspections from three to one hour if the center is star rated was another suggestion. Also, it would be helpful if some requirements often met via paperwork could be moved towards brief inspections (e.g., Spark – QRS). Early educators also asked for less reporting requirements for when children have to be held, and were curious if when an injury occurs, there could be clearer and more unified policy and standard practice when possible. Some early educators also mentioned minimizing the reading and required accommodations for Preschool Promise and burden of apps and platforms, while adding more staff where the State can for support (e.g., ORO). Lastly, many early educators, especially those with multiple sites, complained about the administrative burden of the Child and Adult Care Food Program through the USDA and asked if the State could advocate with the feds to minimize the paperwork.

> *"Licensing so many changes all of the time – I went through so many licensures over the years it was too much"*

> *"CACFP (USDA child and adult care food program) program – we backed out of it, we still have the same guidelines, but we are not part of it due to the oversight and paper work – too much audits"*

> *"Immunization program – why the report when a registered family doesn't? Why can't the State go through it? Or someone buy me the program that the school use to print out the report, instead? I have to count and fill it out – Bright wheel can help, but I don't have time for that"*

Opportunities for system changes. Child care early educators' knowledge is an underutilized resource. Early educators are at the center of the care system. Their position uniquely connects them to children, families, specialists, and administration. As a result, they are intimately aware of what improvements are needed. If systems utilize early educators' knowledge, they would be better equipped to make changes that benefit children most. There is a need for feedback loops from early educators to care systems so that change can be informed by what is happening on the ground. To effectively utilize their expertise, early educators desired to make systems and polices more practical and meaningful for them and families. For example, how can the ORO education requirements be waived through years of work experience?

> *"I cannot get to 11 because I don't have a BA, but changing the steps so you don't have a BA (can help getting a future job)"*

How can the State communicate with families about Spark ratings and what they mean when a early educator has five stars? How can the State support early educators with tools for admin and teachers during the summer months when the ESD is closed? How can the State intervene when Early Childhood Intervention does not qualify children that were obviously in need of help? Where can early educators report complaints about unprofessional colleagues and ECE professionals who are causing more harm than help? How can CCR&Rs be more supportive when early educators are just starting out, struggling with different issues surrounding cars, or how to secure funds to purchase training courses for employees, especially in languages other than English. How can RSPs coordinate communications between early educators and ECE professionals for certain cases so that early educators don't have to engage three coaches, CCR&Rs, and Preschool for All.

> *"We need more communications between those working with kids DHS, ESD, families, [early educators], etc. Foster Care and Lifeways"*

Also, when early educators are experiencing issues with complaints about them, how can the State support them so they are given a fair chance to explain their side of the story and the approaches they take. Early educators felt like the complaints of families matter more than the explanation of the early educators.

> *"When you get in trouble – Valid Finding – you can appeal it, but it doesn't do any good, because their information is more valid and you cannot prove right – someone said I don't change diapers all day, but I didn't have a chart or way to track it. If we didn't have this system in place it's impossible to prove it didn't happen. You're guilty until proven innocent – it shouldn't be that way."*

Lastly, early educators were keen to ask how the State is demonstrating feedback is heard and applied to rules, policies, systems, and approaches. At times, early educators feel like their feedback is not taken seriously or applied where possible. The State needs to better communicate the impacts and changes made based on early educator input.

Professionalization of the Workforce

Early educators shared that, although many enter this field because of a desire to care for children, they struggle to acquire the knowledge and skills to run a business. There is a long history and continued narrative that frames care-work as less professional than other fields, largely because care work is culturally associated with women's work and the gendered workforce skewing feminine. However, early educators recognize their need for support to run and manage a business show and the importance of building personal and professional supports in order to successfully care for all children while also providing an essential service.

> *"You have to think of this work as a profession and not just being a babysitter – a cohort on building a better business. I needed this support and mindset to be a professional business owner. Many [early educators] don't start here. It took me five years before I became a real professional. Then I could do more in my home."*

> *"I need to keep learning, so I am learning business at the Community College; I am not a professional yet."*

> *"I am so worried about finding insurances – due to PP requirement of having all the insurance; I called a few others and they denied me because of child care"*

> *"I am uninsured and cannot get insured – the three that do it in Oregon have raised their rates very high because of the safety portal – little things are dings on peoples license which creates a legal risk that insurance doesn't want to cover"*

> *"It takes forever to apply for all of these grant opportunities – it asked for so many details about plans, architecture, I don't know that stuff, and go to bullet point 1.3.4 – what or where is that? It's so confusing."*

From early educators we learned about the business supports, ideal approaches, and grant training they desired to help them become professionals, secure new care centers and resources, and to keep their businesses running legally. These include:

Operating a business. Early educators, especially those running smaller centers and home-based businesses, often struggle getting information about how to stay in compliance with the laws and regulations of running a child care/early learning program. Early educators also shared a desire to learn about other best practices for operating a successful business. Regional Service Providers in rural areas also expressed worry about the lack of business support which really hurts the small number of home early educators in their regions, often competing with well funded school programs and other programs funded by Preschool Promise. Early educators need more information about general business operation guidelines and checklists. They asked for legal and tax advice and connection with those who specialize in child care businesses, such as what can be written off. Early educators need help with marketing their business, keeping turnover rate down, building and managing budgets, and technology to support business operations. Questions about Insurance specific to child care early educators were abundant, with early educators needing more information about how to find and maintain insurance and minimizing dings on licenses which affect insurance, overall how to protect a business in the child care industry.

Lastly, early educators wanted support with securing grants or other funding opportunities for supporting and expanding their businesses. They want access to funding that can help cover additional resources or training for their businesses. They know these opportunities exist but feel lost in how to approach it and desire hand on support.

Accessibility in training and support. Early educators had general considerations that were commonly expressed about ideal training and support around accessibility, cost, platform, language, and timing. These trainings should be free or reimbursable, in-person and online, hands-on, more comprehensive, offered in languages other than English. Early educators also desired better and more advanced advertising of available training options and in-demand support for when difficult situations arise and advice is needed.

Table 23. Summary of early educator-dominant systems elements

Element	Approaches	Select Examples
Understanding Suspension and Expulsion	Importance of eliminating 0-5 suspension and expulsion	• More understanding about how, why, to whom suspension and expulsion is happening • Why is the prohibition happening and what is being put in place to ensure it is successful?
	Clarity on rules to follow to prevent suspension and expulsion	• What are the rules, approaches, and processes guiding the prohibition implementation, in particular to the expectation and possible consequences of educators?
Relieving Administrative Burden and Addressing Inefficiencies	Intact systems and availability of resources	• Who can actually help with what • Free resources, materials, guidance, and trainings • Technology courses
	Language and technical support, training, and assistance with paperwork	• Support with paper work • Technology classes • Offerings in languages other than English
	Minimizing the burden and frequency of requirements and paperwork	• Minimize the frequency of and number of folks involved with licensing, inspections, and home visits • Removing language and technical barriers • Data and tools to know what is and is not available and to track progress of addressing suspension and expulsion
	Opportunities for system change	• Make systems and polices more practical (e.g., licensure, ORO, complaint appeals) • Demonstrating feedback is heard and applied to rules, policies, systems, and approaches • Summer time support • State is responsive to unmet needs

Professionalization of the workforce	Operating a business	• How to operate a business and become a child care professional
		  • Support and retain employees
		  • Marketing
		  • Taxes
		  • Budget
		  • Insurance (child care specific)
		  • Grant writing and securing additional funding to grow business

	Accessibility in training and support	• In person and hands on • More comprehensive trainings more often • Free or reimbursable • Advertising of available options • In demand support – Advice when difficult situations arise

5.7 Chapter Five Summary of Findings

- Interviews and focus groups with early childhood educators identified strategies of support educators and better allow them to keep children in care settings. They also identified early educator perceived "gaps in support" that if addressed would allow educators to better focus on children and families.
- Early educators described the importance of establishing a relationship with a child first, as central to the profession of child care. A Child Care First approach is considered essential to all other strategies that support educators, children and families.
- The majority of the early educators identified strategies that were centered around interpersonal relationships (i.e., early educator and -child, -family, -early educator, -specialist).
- Early educators described their experiences engaging with dominant systems, which represent agencies at local, state and federal levels. A few early educators we heard from offered high praise for local and state level support, while the majority referenced often feeling uninformed, overburdened, and unsupported.

Note About the Use of Suspension to Prevent Expulsion

The practice of using suspension to prevent expulsion was noted by early educators as something they may resort to under certain conditions. While this practice can be abused or over-relied on to keep expulsion numbers low, it is important to understand why early educators may choose this approach in order to keep children in programs.

We learned that limited early educator capacity is a significant determinant of using suspension to prevent expulsion. Children who express big or challenging behaviors require the time and attention of early educators. This can be challenging when early educators are already working over capacity and struggle with high early educator-child ratios in the classroom or care setting. Further, sometimes early educators do not have training to manage or de-escalate situations, especially if a child's behavior is harming other children or early educators themselves. This practice may be the only way to handle the situation.

This practice typically means that the child temporarily leaves the care setting, be it for the rest of the day or reducing hours and days throughout a week. Early educators shared that this practice can prompt families to recognize their child's behaviors as something that needs to be addressed. Thus, using suspension to prevent expulsion can lead to early educators working closely with families to ensure they are on board with addressing their child's big behaviors.

Early educators shared that going down this route can help the child reset from a bad day. It can give early educators a break from stressful situations. And it can allow for some spaciousness for early educators to

work with colleagues and families to come up with a plan for how to care for the child.

> *"Personally, I am not for S&E [suspension and expulsion]. But when you're in a full day program, sometimes limiting hours really works for them, but that doesn't work for all and I get it. Shorter day and build up a longer one, [it's] not about not being inclusive, but serving the needs of each child individually. If we cannot do things like that, we need people who [can] come in when we reach out... [for] resources. I need them to be well trained in the actuality of what it's really like in the midst of a situation, but also how to mentor and support the teachers."*

When evaluating this practice, rather than making sweeping judgments about whether to condone it or not, it is important to understand the contexts in which it is used. For example, we heard from home-based early educators in rural parts of the state that sometimes soft expulsion may be the only way to keep a child needing more care in their programs. With very few child care options in rural areas, if early educators resort to actual suspension and expulsion, families will have few to no options for child care.

> *"Child care early educators need to have agency in their program."*

Furthermore, it is important to remember that this practice is a way for early educators to have autonomy over how they run their programs. Reducing a child's hours in the program is a early educator-led decision that has wide ranging implications – positive and negative – but when the early educator leads with a child first care perspective, using suspension to prevent expulsion can support the well-being of the child, the family, and the early educator.

When the suspension and expulsion prohibition goes into effect, early educators will need clear guidance and support with navigating its rules, regulations, and expectations for compliance. To what extent will these kinds practices be part of or outside the purview of the law? What level of autonomy over decision-making will early educators retain?

> *"I would love a clear system in place for providing temporary breaks or alternative care for children who might need a little extra space to regroup, rather than considering suspension or expulsion."*

> *"What happens when [early educators] just say no? [When] they wont even take kids in the first place, how will the State deal with this? If the rule is in effect, then some [early educators] will be turning kids away who have issues and not even enroll them so they don't get 'stuck' with them!"*

6

Recommendations from Early Educators

These findings and recommendations presented in this report reflect the perspectives and explicit desires of early childhood educators working in the field. System level perspectives have not been included in this report to keep educators' experiences and opinions central.

This report was not legislatively intended to support DELC in upstanding the ECB program specifically, but to learn about suspension and expulsion prevention statewide from a high level, which means including elements DELC does and does own or maintain. These findings should be understood as a representation of educators' voices and lived experiences, and DELC's reflections can be found in the agency response letter included at the end.

We preface the recommendations with some key strategies that will broadly set the conditions for a comprehensive and effective statewide suspension and expulsion prevention program. These key strategies are followed by the recommendations, which are separated into short-term and long-term groupings. The short-term recommendations will support early educators preparing for the prohibition while the long-term recommendations are important for the sustained support that early educators need to be successful early educators once the prohibition is in place.

Key Strategies

Regional focus and control. First, most, if not all, approaches to preventing suspension and expulsion should be centered within and guided by a regional focus, and controlled by regional leaders. One of the primary concerns heard from early educators was that they don't have any capacity or desire to engage and coordinate with a multitude of individuals, systems, and processes, especially when they often do not get what they seek. Early educators are overburdened and underserved. Keeping the focus of efforts and their control at the regional level allows for more meaningful and accessible contacts for early educators. Further, Regional Service Providers have varying needs and capacities. Some can take care of all early educators in their region due to years of coordination and larger workforces and mostly just need resources and minimal support from the State (mostly in more populous regions). Other Regional Service Providers can handle a few aspects of preventing suspension and expulsion but can certainly benefit from significant support from the State (often, but not exclusively more rural counties). Knowing that the State will need to facilitate and require certain coordination, on all matters that are flexible, we recommend allowing the regions to decide how they would like to run things and to what extent they need the State's support.

One-on-one support. Another common concern from early educators was that when supports are put into place for children, frequent 1-on-1 attention is needed. Early educators valued 1-on-1 support, which ensured that applying practical skills made noticeable improvements in the classroom and at home. There have to be resources and support in place to ensure 1-on-1 support with added opportunities for follow-up and feedback from early educators. To whatever extent this expectation can be centered in support processes, the more successful early educators will be in preventing suspension and expulsion.

Responsive and accountable systems. Concerns and struggles with finding appropriate and available resources and support for children with big behaviors, disabilities, and other needs was overwhelmingly expressed throughout the research process. Early educators expressed deep concerns about the State's ability to step up and address these gaps in services and lack of available resources and fear that with the prohibition in place, they will be the ones penalized. The State and regions must be well coordinated and demonstrate responsiveness and accountability through systems, followup, and communications around resources and support to ensure the prohibition is successful.

Short term goals

Communication and guidance about the prohibition

- Develop communications products and strategies

to share details about

- 0-5 suspension and expulsion in Oregon: how, why, to whom suspension and expulsion is happening
- Why the prohibition happening, what is being put in place to ensure it is successful, and who/what informed them
- What rules, approaches, and processes are guiding the prohibition implementation?
- What are the possible penalties or consequences, and what are the processes for addressing violations of the prohibition?
- How does the prohibition impact educator eligibility for insurance?

- Provide up-to-date information that is easily accessible about resources, contacts, trainings, and compliance requirements
- Establish clear guidance for educators on how to prevent suspension and expulsion. Guidance should include:
  - Laws, policies, and rules that educators are expected to follow
  - What educators can and cannot do
  - What is expected of families
  - Suggested language for sharing information about the prohibition with families
  - Alternatives to suspension and expulsion
  - Addressing the use of soft expulsion in different care settings (i.e., home-based versus larger centers)
- Provide guidance for educators to collect race, ethnicity, home language, and disability (IFSP, a development disability, or chronic medical needs) data on those children who experience suspension or expulsionary practices.

Regional collaboration

- Continue working with Regional Service Providers to ensure they are prepared to address prohibition needs in their region
- Create a centralized database of statewide and regional support services for educators and families
- Create formal feedback loops between educators and the State to publicly demonstrate that feedback is heard and applied to rules, policies, and approaches
- Ongoing convenings with language leads to document and understand barriers experienced by and desired approaches of non-English speaking educators

Child care-centered trainings

- Develop hands-on, multilingual, free, online and in-person professional development and continuing education trainings such as:
  - Prevention – trauma informed approaches to recognizing social and emotional needs of children
  - Addressing big behaviors – hands-on strategies around addressing aggression, deescalation, and physical restraint
  - Responsive environments – designing spaces to be responsive to diverse sensory and spatial needs
  - Disabilities – identifying differences of developmental delay and larger disabilities

Audit of administrative systems

- Conduct an audit of administrative systems and requirements to identify redundancies, inefficiencies, and administrative burden. This audit is meant to streamline the bureaucratic processes that educators interact with. Areas that require immediate streamlining include:
  - Minimizing the frequency of and number of folks involved with licensing, inspections, and home visits
  - Making forms available in multiple languages
  - Technology supports in languages other than English
  - Making currently available resources easier to identify

Long-term goals

Connecting Peers

- Establish an online registry of educators across the state to connect with each other (with prior consent). Identify those who would like to be mentors/mentees, coaches, and accountability buddies.
- Provide funding to Regional Service Providers to create peer-to-peer sharing platforms or other networking approaches and opportunities (e.g., workshops, learning and skills exchanges, communities of practice) for educators to share experiences and resources.
- Provide low barrier mini-grants, up to $5,000 each, to educators to host regional resource-sharing forums and opportunities to meet and collaborate with other educators
- Host regional in-person, online, and multi-lingual conferences to communicate information about the suspension and expulsion prohibition and approaches for keeping children in programs
- Fund and develop in-person training with real-life scenarios of children with big and challenging behaviors. Enable educators to share approaches of working with children and strategies for caring for themselves. Encourage specialists to get involved and share their own experiences and skills.
    - Consider weekend or late evening training for all staff members to attend
    - Include multilingual sessions or non-English speaking sessions
        - The current webinar standard is not enough. Educators shared that they want to ask and hear from others in real time

Accessible Resources

- Compile a list of technologies for child care educators that can help them connect with families and keep track of administrative work
- Create a suite of classroom materials that are directly delivered to educators, including visual informational signs, calming techniques, and sensory materials
- Offer guidance and tools for creating culturally expansive care centers. Types of requested guidance include:
    - Integrating culturally specific concepts into daily/weekly curriculum
    - Incorporating family traditions into activities, like songs, recipes, and stories shared by families
    - Organizing cultural celebrations, language lessons, and show and tell
    - Connecting to community based organizations, community health workers, and other community leaders
- Provide mini-grants for educators to purchase specialized materials and sensory equipment for the classroom
- Create a educator-centered general resource website that includes templates, guidelines, and case studies of other programs (what's working, what does success look like, what challenges have been overcome, etc.)
- Offer free resources, materials, guidance, and trainings to eliminate suspension and expulsion
- Expand on Oregon's multilingual and migrant education programming. Extend the number of languages and communities being served. Arab and African educators asked for more visibility and resources for their communities. While Latine educators have some more resources than the ones mentioned above, they ask for them to be expanded upon.

Family Supports

- A centralized database for family-centered resources and support such as:
    - Mental health resources, local therapists, specialists, and coaching
    - Tools and technologies for information sharing and tracking children's development

    - Trainings, seminars, and educational materials that are also available in multiple languages
- Funding for programs that help build parent- and family-centered communities and spaces to gather to promote overall well-being, access to resources and tools, and connection.

Workplace Supports

- Establish a process for documenting how suspension and expulsion decision-making was shared between administration and educators as a mechanism for building in workplace checks and balances
- Support educators with creating guidance on clear policies regarding behavioral issues with students, considering legal and compliance requirements as well as educator-led best practices
- Publish guidance for best practices for working with specialists. This could be informed by:
    - An early educator-led taskforce or committee
    - An outcome of an evaluation process
- Fund experts and/or accredited institutions to create continuing education units for educators on specialized topics related to Prevention, Addressing Big Behaviors, and Responsive Environments (see Early Educator-Specialist section for details)
- Provide grants to early educators to access "as-needed" specialist consultations
- Develop career pathways and experiential opportunities for young people who might be interested in being a child care educator in the future
- State funded training for specialists on best practices for supporting child care educators with keeping children in programs. Some best practices to include are:
- Sharing evaluations and learnings with educators
    - Co-constructing IFSPs
    - Co-learning approaches
    - More frequent and longer visits
- Task RSP to develop a liaison protocol to help bridge the communication between the child care educators and external support professionals (e.g., speech therapists, occupational therapists, inclusion coaches, early interventionist, mental health and behavioral therapists, etc.)
- Establish a plan to support summertime child care educators who are underfunded and over-capacitated

Business Development Supports

- Establish business classes and trainings that address:
    - Support and retaining employees
    - Marketing
    - Taxes
    - Budget
    - Insurance (child care specific)
    - Grant writing and opportunities to secure other funding sources
- Fund and develop in-person training for developing field-specific paperwork and jargon. In order to support the professionalization of the workforce, there has to be direct support for educators who are currently struggling or would like trainings in developing their field-specific literacy.
    - Consider weekends or late evenings for these sessions
    - Include multilingual sessions or non-English speaking sessions
- Support home-based educators in sustaining cultural celebrations and bilingual programs. Provide mini-grants to support cultural promotion in child-care spaces. Many BIPOC home-based educators do this work instinctively and can use financial support to move these realities into structural changes for the children they work with.

- Funding and supporting *Promotora*-like figures in state-wide initiatives. Within various Latine communities, *promotoras* act as bridges between public and dominant institutions. Foster the promotion of cultural figures by expanding on this concept and the various community members who are respected and doing this work in their communities.

Oregon
Tina Kotek, Governor

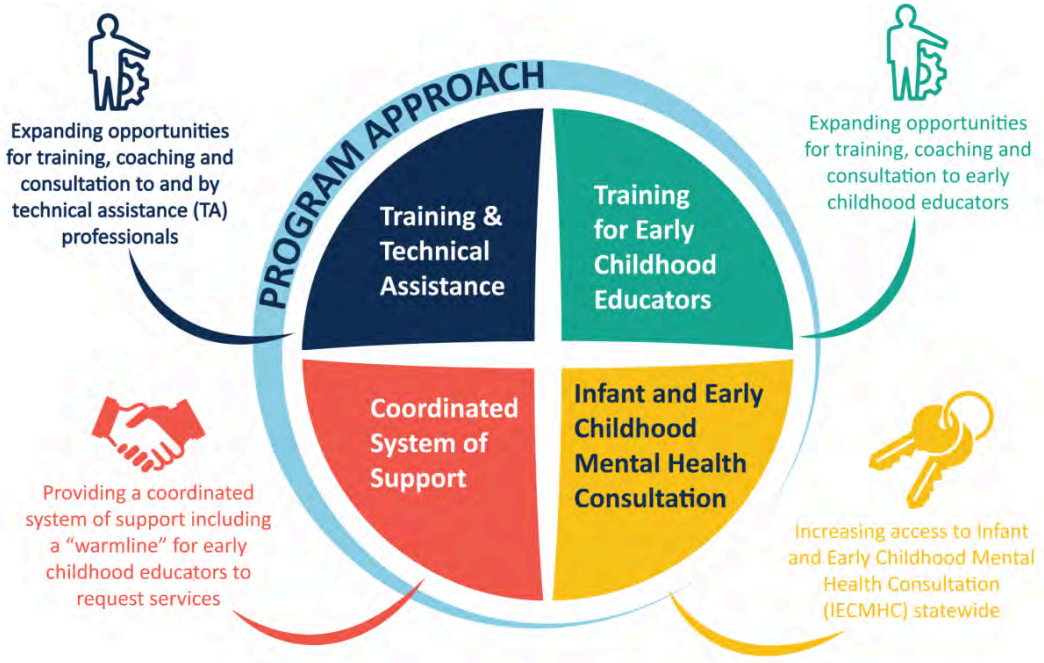
Oregon Department of
Early Learning
and Care

700 Summer Street NE #350
Salem, Oregon 97301
DELC.Info@delc.oregon.gov
Oregon.gov/delc

Department of Early learning and Care Response to the Oregon Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Research Study

The Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) would like to thank the researchers at the Coalition of Communities of Color for sharing their perspectives, time, and energy while working and meeting with early childhood educators in the community. Centering the experiences and needs of educators helps us to continue to improve on our system of supports and resources at DELC that serve our early childhood workforce. While the purpose of this report was to design and conduct a research study on early educators experiences with suspension and expulsion in Oregon's early learning and care environments, the findings in this report will also be used to inform DELC's Professional Learning System and Every Child Belongs (ECB).

ECB is designed to increase supports and coordination of resources to reduce disparities in the use of suspension and expulsion in early learning and care programs. ECB is structured around four key initiatives:



The work of ECB builds directly upon the existing early learning and care infrastructure through professional development, community coordinated systems of support, and the establishment of local DELC funded Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant roles.

While the report centers the voices of early childhood educators, we would like to take the opportunity to share some agency reflections on the findings of the report as well as connections to Every Child Belongs (ECB). These connections and reflections were not included in the body of the report because the agency determined it would overshadow the experiences and opinions of the educators that participated.

Agency Reflections on the Oregon Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Research Report Findings

1. **Acknowledgement that child care is a challenging profession** – The reflections offered by educators and programs leaders in this report, especially in Chapter 5, mirrors the challenges noted by early educators nationally: caring for children requires hard work, high emotional labor, and persists in the face of challenging situations. At the same time, child care and early learning as a profession has a deep history of underinvestment and oppression. The impacts of COVID-19 have compounded both the availability of the workforce and the experiences of children and families. The stories and experiences of educators shared in this report represent not only the challenges inherent in caring for children, but also the ripple effect of workforce shortages and the lingering effects of a global pandemic. Under these circumstances, the likelihood increases that suspension and expulsion will be used as a strategy for managing challenging situations. As evident in this report, early educators need and deserve to have access to the supports and resources that DELC and its partners are developing.
2. **Early childhood system-level recommendations may require additional context to align with provider-level needs and recommendations** - Some suggestions from early educators should be considered within the context of the needs of the system holistically as there may be barriers outside of the control of the state. One example is that there are clear federal requirements regarding health and safety, trainings, etc. that can also create a burden on providers and the programs they operate. Another

example relates to section 5.2 (i.e., Early Educator-Child) that describes having high adult to child ratios can have a negative impact on early educators. While prior research has shown that lower classroom ratios can lead to better outcomes, any change to classroom ratios would create system-level ripples and other unintended outcomes. For instance, if ratios were decreased, fewer numbers of children can be served unless there is a corresponding increase in the size of the workforce, the total amount of compensation required to fund and train the workforce, and the number of facilities dedicated to child care programs. A decrease in ratios, therefore, would drastically increase the financial burden on the system and could inadvertently end up excluding more children than are currently impacted by suspension and expulsion.

3. **Opportunity for increased awareness and communication of existing resources and supports** – Agency staff identified multiple instances across the report where early educators desired supports aligned with existing resources currently provided by DELC. While not all resources and supports listed in the Resource Mapping Survey (Ch 4) are available to all early educators, there were specific requests for trainings opportunities and supports that are accessible. One example of this includes the need to "identify availability between adults" described in section 5.1 (i.e., Child First Care) in Chapter 5. Resources such as Focused Child Care Networks (available at state wide Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies) professional association affiliates, utilization of Child Care Substitute of Oregon for mental wellness time and connecting with a technical assistance professional for other supports are currently available to educators in Oregon and are intended to support these needs. However, we also feel it is important to acknowledge that there are often not enough of these listed resources to serve the entire workforce, which was a re-occurring theme identified by educators in Ch 4. While there were many other connections to existing resources like the listed example, there is an opportunity for the agency to consider additional communication strategies to make these available resources more well known in the community. Additionally, it will likely require additional investments to scale these strategies to better reach the communities that need them.

4. **Opportunities for more messaging on the complexity of program and resource management** – Throughout the report, it is clear there is confusion regarding which agencies are responsible for what programs. This confusion spans programs that are led by local, state, and federal agencies. For example, described in section 5.6 on

Early Educators – Dominant Systems, educators describe their desires to relieve administrative burden and address inefficiencies. DELC recognizes and acknowledges the frustration educators experience challenges in managing the administrative burden of operating a child care program. It is important to note that the child care system is a combination of multiple systems, each with its own funding streams, which in turn, have their own individual requirements. As such, what may appear to educators to be a cohesive system operating solely under DELC's discretion, is in fact, highly complex and subject to regulations that may or may not be within DELC's control. Acknowledging the complicated nature of understanding by whom and how programs are funded and implemented, we recognize there are opportunities to make these inter-related systems clearer to the communities that utilize them.

5. **Prevention of suspension and expulsion requires the support of all entities involved in the early childhood system** – The current landscape of suspension and expulsion use in early child settings in Oregon is described at length in Ch 3. One noteworthy takeaway is that publicly funded programs that already have a ban on the use of suspension and expulsion, and that also have technical assistance supports and infant and early childhood mental health consultation in place are still reporting cases of suspension and expulsion in their programs. While having supports like technical assistance, infant and early childhood mental health consultation, and training available can significantly reduce instances of suspension and expulsion, it doesn't completely eliminate its use. In order to move towards the elimination of suspension and expulsion in early childhood, DELC needs the support and buy-in of all involved in the early childhood system. While Every Child Belongs will mobilizes the existing technical assistance system in new ways, creates access to infant and early childhood mental health consultation for child care programs who have not formerly had access, and aims to create a simple way for educators to request support when a child is at risk of suspension or expulsion, there is also a need for other local and state systems to contribute to building a wholistic the system of supports. For instance, when Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants are doing their work, they will sometimes discover that an individual child, family, or educator would benefit from a referral for mental/behavioral health therapy or other family support services. Some children may also require a developmental

assessment. These types of services may fall under the purview of the Oregon Health Authority, the Oregon Department of Human Services, and/or the Oregon Department of Education, and as such, preventing suspension and expulsion is a responsibility shared by these agencies.

Identified Connections to Every Child Belongs

1. **Concepts underlying the Pyramid Model approach are perceived beneficial by early educators.** Chapter Five describes an approach which encourages educators and programs leaders to keep each child at the center of their decision making and planning. This type of approach is also commonly referred to as "relationship-based care" and has been a cornerstone of high-quality early learning and care for several generations. The Pyramid Model is foundationally built on the importance of nurturing and responsive relationships. Pyramid Model is a framework of evidence-based practices for promoting children's healthy social-emotional development. Within the Pyramid Model, trainings are available which focus on infant toddlers, preschool settings, guidance for families, implicit bias, culturally responsive classroom practices and strategies for preventing and addressing challenging behaviors. Pyramid Model has been shown to reduce the use of exclusionary practices in early learning programs. Oregon has secured free e-modules in both English and Spanish for all educators, has established a pool of trainers in each region and has additional implementation support funded through the Early Learning System Initiative at Oregon State University.

2. **Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation will meet provider identified needs**. Evident in section 5.2 was significant feelings of stress and burnout experienced by Oregon's early educators. Although these educators did not explicitly identify infant and early childhood mental health consultation as a needed resource, this absence is unsurprising: it is hard to describe or wish for a service that one has never experienced before. What educators clearly did describe and wish for is support in navigating challenging situations with children's behavior. Infant and early childhood mental health consultation will provide educators with access to specialists who are skilled and trained to address challenging situations. In addition to helping to resolve challenging behaviors, infant and early childhood mental health consultation engages educators in reflective practice and is known to reduce educators' levels of stress and burnout. Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

Consultation achieves these outcomes by centering relationships and relationship-based care, which were identified as essential to educators throughout Ch 5.

3. **Providers appreciated and were supported by the resources already in existence –** These resources are also referred to by the agency as technical assistance and/or professional development. Resources and supports that educators found beneficial included CCR&Rs, Early Learning Hubs, Focused Child Care Networks, and more. While not always explicitly named by educators, by the descriptions they provided agency staff identified similarities between requested supports and DELC-funded resources existing in the community. In addition, future investments being injected into the professional learning system through ECB align with the approach described as Child First Care and are connected to nationally researched practices on antibias and antiracist classroom practices. Regional CCR&Rs will be provided with Train the Trainer opportunities with national experts and guidance on local implementation with early learning programs. Additional Train the Trainer opportunities will also be provided regionally with a focus on trauma informed care. These Train the Trainer sessions are additional to the already provided sessions and will increase the availability of Pyramid Model trainers in each region.

These recommendations will allow the agency to strengthen the professional learning system and make improvements to the overall early childhood system within our purview. The Department of Early Learning and Care appreciates the wisdom and expertise of early childhood educators across the state, and thanks the Coalition of Communities of Color for their research.

Appendix A

1.0 Interview and Focus Group Consent Script

Suspension and Expulsion Interview and Survey Consent Script

Before we begin, can you tell us a little bit about your role and work?

Our goal is to produce meaningful statewide data to support the creation of recommendations for strategies, processes, and systems that will initially reduce, and ultimately eliminate suspension and expulsion in Oregon.

Consent Script for Educators:
Thank you for agreeing to talk with us today about your experiences as a child care educator. This interview is part of a larger Oregon-wide study that is funded by the Department of Early Learning and Care ("DELC"). DELC has partnered with us, researchers at the Coalition of Communities of Color, to conduct interviews and analyze this data. The goals of this interview is to understand:

- what it takes to keep children in programs, and especially children with special behavioral, physical, and mental health needs.
- what gets in the way of keeping children with special behavioral, physical, and mental health needs in programs

Data gathered from interviews will be used to support the creation of recommendations that will reduce, and ultimately eliminate suspension and expulsion in Oregon. This interview will take approximately one hour. To thank you for sharing your experiences and knowledge during this interview, we are able to offer you a $50 Visa gift card. You do not have to answer any question you don't want to and you can end the interview at any time.

We would like to record this interview. A recording will assist in accurately transcribing your responses and will help with future qualitative data analysis. The recording will be securely stored, and any direct quotes taken from this interview will be anonymized. Identifying information will also be removed. If it is not possible to anonymize direct quotes, we will ask your permission to include it, before circulating or publishing it. Do we have your permission to record this interview?

Do you have any questions before we get started?
Questions shown in Appendix C.

(Consent Script for Educators in Spanish)
Script de consentimiento para educadora/es en español:
Gracias por aceptar esta platica con nosotros hoy sobre sus experiencias como proveedor de cuidado infantil. Esta entrevista es parte de un estudio más amplio a nivel de Oregón financiado por el Departamento de Atención y Aprendi-zaje Temprano ("DELC"). DELC se ha asociado con nosotros, investigadores de la Coalición de Comunidades de Color, para realizar entrevistas y anali-zar estos datos. Usaremos las experiencias que usted comparta hoy para ayudar a comprender las fortalezas y desafíos de los proveedores de cuidado infantil en todo el estado.

Consent
Nos gustaría grabar este grupo enfoque. Una grabación ayudará a transcribir con precisión sus respuestas y ayudará con futuros análisis de datos cualitativos. La grabación se almacenará de forma segura y sus testimonios serán anónimos. También se eliminará la información de identificación. Si no es posible anonimizar las citas directas, le pediremos permiso para incluirlas antes de publicarlas.

Propósito de esta reunión
Los objetivos son para comprender:
lo que se necesita para mantener a los niños en los programas, y especialmente a los niños con necesidades especiales de salud mental, física y conductual.
¿Qué se interpone en el camino para mantener a los niños con necesidades especiales de salud mental, física y conductual en los programas?

¿Tenemos su permiso para grabar esta entrevista?

2.0 Resource Mapping Data Cleaning Protocols

Fraudulent response protocol

We detected and removed 2,148 responses from the final dataset by using the following criteria:

1. **Incomplete responses**: Responses less than 35% complete were removed from the dataset.
2. **Duration**: The responses with less than 5 minutes were removed from the dataset. Any responses that were less than 8 minutes were closely inspected.
3. **Duplicate IP addresses**: Any responses that repeated the same IP address more than six times were automatically removed from the survey. Other responses with IP addresses repeated less than six times were closely inspected to ensure they were unique and real responses.
4. **Repeated phrases**: Qualitative questions were checked for specific repeated phrases in the responses. Bots would often give the same answer to a question multiple times, and these responses were removed after close inspection.
5. **Qualtrics Bot Score**: Responses that scored low (less than 0.5) on the Q_RecaptchaScore were highly suspected to be fraudulent responses but were inspected closely before removal.

Appendix B

Suspension and Expulsion in Oregon's Early Learning and Care System

A baseline of knowledge report submitted to Oregon's Department of Early Learning and Care

Coalition of Communities of Color
Prepared by the Research Justice Institute
Lead Author: Reema K. Mendoza, Ph.D.

DECEMBER 2023

Acknowledgments: We are grateful to our colleagues at the Coalition of Communities or Color, AB Cultural Drivers, OSLC Developments Inc., Portland State University's Center for the Improvement of Child and Family Services, and Oregon's Department of Early Learning and Care for their time, energy, discussion, input, and feedback about the content of this report. We also deeply appreciate the families and early educators, both in Oregon and across the country, who participated in all of the original research studies synthesized here.

Funding: This publication was made possible by Grant Number 90TP0020-01-03 from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF) and by general funding from Oregon's Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of DHHS, ACF, or DELC.

Recommended Citation: Coalition of Communities of Color. (2023). "Suspension and expulsion in Oregon's early learning and care system: A baseline of knowledge report submitted to Oregon's Department of Early Learning and Care." Portland, Oregon: Coalition of Communities of Color.

Suspension and Expulsion in Oregon's Early Learning and Care System

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

In June 2023, Oregon's Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC) commissioned us, researchers at the Research Justice Institute (RJI) of the Coalition of Communities of Color (CCC,) to design and conduct a research study on suspension and expulsion in Oregon's early learning and care environments, focusing on ways to reduce the use of those practices. This commissioned work serves as the research study required by Senate Bill 236 (2021)[1] and House Bill 2166 (2021).[2] Together with Oregon's DELC staff, we decided that this study would include a literature review of prior Oregon-based studies, new engagement with priority communities, and a mapping of resources currently available to early learning and care professionals. This report serves as the first planned component – a literature review.

Here, we provide **a baseline of knowledge** about suspension and expulsion – two types of exclusionary practices – in Oregon's early learning and care system. We focus specifically on programs and services for children ages 0-5 years old, the early educators providing the programs and services (note: we construe "early

1 81st O.R. Legislative Assembly. Senate Bill 236. Regular Session 2021.

2 81st O.R. Legislative Assembly. House Bill 2166. Regular Session 2021.

educator" broadly, see Appendix A for our definition), and the children and families being served. When possible, we contextualize the information with data and research from other states and at the national level. In this synthesis, we aim to address the following three key questions:

1. Who does or does not use exclusionary practices in Oregon? Why or why not?

2. Who in Oregon is or is not suspended or expelled? Why or why not?

3. How can Oregon's early learning and care system better support early educators, families, and young children, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the use of exclusionary discipline practices?

We bring a **research equity approach** to this project. For this literature review, this means we prioritize prior studies that center and elevate the lived experiences of children, families, and early educators, particularly those who are part of communities currently and historically marginalized by Oregon's education systems. For the purposes of this project, we focus on children, families, and educators who are part of and/or who serve communities of color, the communities who speak languages other than English, and disability communities.
We will use the synthesized information presented in this report to guide how we plan the other two components of the research project. It will inform the design of our data collection, including which community or communities we prioritize, what research questions we aim to answer, and
what research methods we use. It will also inform how we approach mapping available resources to support early learning and care professionals to keep children in their programs.

Oregon's Early Learning and Care System

A SNAPSHOT OF YOUNG CHILDREN AND CHILD CARE IN OREGON

Nearly 600,000 children under age 13 live in Oregon, and more than one-third of these children are under age 5.[3] In most (over 60%) one- or two-parent households with children under age 6, the single parent or both parents are employed3, meaning that these households require non-parental child care for their young children. In Oregon, non-parental early care and education is available across multiple settings, including friend, family, and neighbor care (FFN), family- or home-based programs, center-based programs, including Head Start centers, community-based organizations, and public schools.[4]

The Department of Early Learning and Care ("DELC") is the state government agency "dedicated to early care and education policy and program administration".[5] Oregon's DELC was established by House Bill 3073 (2021)[6] to be a stand-alone agency starting on July 1, 2023. DELC funds and administers multiple programs and services, including Child Care Resource and Referral organizations, Early Learning Hubs, Employment Related Day Care, Preschool Promise, Baby Promise, Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten, Early Head Start, Inclusive Partners, Healthy Families Oregon, Early Childhood Equity Fund, and Relief Nurseries. These programs and services support the well-being of children and families across Oregon. During the 2019-2021 biennium, over 30,000 children were served by 5 of

3 Oregon Child Care Research Partnership. (2023). Early Care and Education Profile: State of Oregon 2022. Oregon State University.

4 Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division (2019). The state of early care & education and child care assistance in oregon. A report submitted by the Early Learning Division to the Legislative Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care. December, 2019.

5 Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care. (2023). About Us.

6 81st O.R. Legislative Assembly. House Bill 3073. Regular Session 2021.

these programs.[4]

OREGON'S EARLY CHILDHOOD SUSPENSION AND EXPULSION PREVENTION PROGRAM

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 2166 (2021)[2], which established the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program (ECSEPP). This bill states that the purpose of the ECSEPP is to both reduce the overall use of suspension and expulsion in Oregon's early learning and care settings as well as to reduce the disparities in who is suspended or expelled that are "based on race, ethnicity, language, ability, or any other protected class". The bill specifies that Oregon's early learning and care system will meet this purpose by "[i] incorporating...racial equity, trauma-informed principles and practices and strengths-based multitiered systems of support" into its programs and services and by providing technical assistance (TA), supports, and resources to educators and families about how to promote "children's social emotional well-being and growth" (we added emphasis).

These approaches appropriately focus on system-level changes that will help early learning and care professionals to meet the needs of children in their programs. These approaches are particularly important, because they will support Oregon's early learning and care system to address the inequities in who is suspended or expelled. Based on data from other states and nationally, boys, African American or Black children, Hispanic or Latine children, and children experiencing disabilities are disproportionately suspended and expelled from their early learning and care settings, as well as from their kindergarten to grade 12 school environments (as synthesized in a recent review[7]).

Too often, system leaders, early educators, families, and even children themselves incorrectly believe that the core issue underlying suspension and expulsion is children who are "bad", that children in marginalized communities are particularly "bad", and that "fixing" these "bad" children is the needed solution. These beliefs reflect a deficits-based view of children and families. This view is incorrect, **because the root causes of inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion are systemic**,[8] including early educators' implicit and explicit bias, lack of knowledge about how to provide "support for social-emotional well- being at the individual child, family, classroom, and program level", and insufficient understanding of children's development. Requiring a strengths-based approach that centers racial equity and encourages trauma-informed practices will help DELC to create and expand resources for early educators, to address the real root causes of inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion. This approach will result in a truly transformative ECSEPP.

In 2021, the Oregon Legislature also passed Senate Bill 236 (2021)[1], which establishes a ban on the use of suspension and expulsion to go into effect July 1, 2026. It states that any early learning and care program receiving money from the DELC (formerly the Early Learning Division of the Oregon Department of Education) or any registered or certified early learning and care program "may not suspend or expel any child". The two bills were designed to go together, such that the ECSEPP would be established and implemented in time to provide the resources and supports that early educators need in order not to use suspension and expulsion by July 1, 2026, when the ban required by Senate Bill 236 (2021) goes into effect.

---

7 Zinsser, K.M., et al. (2022). A systematic review of early childhood exclusionary discipline. Review of Educational Research, 92(5), 743-785.

8 Rodriguez-JenKins, J., et al., (2022). Centering racial equity: Design considerations for Oregon's statewide Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program. Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services, School of Social Work, Portland State University. [Final Report to Oregon Department of Education: Early Learning Division].

Early educators: Who does or does not use exclusionary practices in Oregon? Why or why not?

Early learning and care educators in Oregon provided direct information about their use of suspension and expulsion in a recent statewide survey. In 2022, nearly 1 in 5 early educators reported having asked a child in their program to leave or take a break in the last year (19.3% of the 2,166 early educators who completed the survey).[9] For comparison, in a 2006 study of early educators in Massachusetts, researchers discovered that 39.3% reported expelling and 14.7% reported suspending at least one child in the last year.[10] In another 2006 study focused solely on expulsion, researchers found that 10% of teachers from prekindergarten programs across 40 states reported expelling at least one child in the last year.[11] When these researchers focused on Oregon, they found that 10.94% of teachers expelled at least one child in the last year.[11,12] In a recent review of research on suspension and expulsion in early learning and care, researchers report that "[a]cross studies, between 9.0% and 39.3% of teachers or programs had used exclusionary discipline, indicating that this is common across care settings."[7] Thus, compared to other states, Oregon is currently in the middle of the reported range across the country.
Many factors relate to why an early educator may ask a child to leave or take a break from their early learning and care environment. Here, we discuss several factors that recent research has explored. We explicitly connect these factors to system-level policies, practices, and resources – because these will directly inform how Oregon's DELC designs and implements its ECSEPP.

To gain insight into who does and does not use exclusionary practices in Oregon, the researchers who conducted the recent statewide survey examined early educators' responses, separately based on facility type, geographical location of their programs, and whether the programs have state-funded slots.[9] We report these disaggregated data in Table 1. In the columns, we sort these data by whether the values are higher or lower than the percentage reported across all early educators who responded to the survey (19.3%; we refer to this as the "overall rate").* If the percentage in Table 1 is higher than 19.3%, then it means early educators in these settings were more likely to ask a child to leave or take a break compared to the overall rate. Conversely, if the percentage is lower than 19.3%, then it means early educators in these settings were less likely to ask a child to leave or take a break compared to the overall rate.

The early educators who reported that they had asked a child to leave or take a break in the last year also provided information about why they did so.[9] These early educators most commonly endorsed two reasons for asking children to leave or to take a break related to children's behavior (see Table 2): not being able to meet children's need for behavioral support (84.0%) and children's behavior being potentially dangerous to other children (73.7%).

However, when the researchers examined the reasons by facility type, geographic location, and if the program

---

9 Pears, K.C., et al., (2022). Findings from Oregon's early childhood care educator survey 2022: Challenges and opportunities for professional development and coaching. Report submitted to the Oregon Early Learning Division and Early Learning Council, November 2022.

10 Gilliam, W. S., & Shahar, G. (2006) Preschool and child care expulsion and suspension: Rates and predictors in one state. Infants & Young Children, 19(3), 228-245.

11 Gilliam, W. S. (2005). Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion rates in state prekindergarten programs. FCD Policy Brief Series, 3, May, 2005.

12 Gilliam, W. S. (2005). Table 4. Expulsion rates for prekindergarten and K-12 by state. FCD Policy Brief Series, 3, May, 2005.

Table 1. Percentages of early educators who reported having asked a child to leave or take a break in the last year, disaggregated by facility type, geographical location, and whether the programs have state-funded slots (rows). These values are compared to the overall rate across all early educators (19.3%; columns).*

	More Likely to Ask Children to Leave or Take a Break Compared to Overall Rate	Less Likely to Ask Children to Leave or Take a Break Compared to Overall Rate
Facility Type	Community-based center (not HS) (25.6%) Child care co-located in K-12 school (25.1%)	Family- or home-based child care (10.1%)
Geographic Location	Urban (21.2%)	Rual (14.0%)
State-Funded Pre-K Slots	No state-funded pre-k slots (21.1%)	n/a

Note: We report percentages that were 5% ore more above or below the overall rate of 19.3%. These findings are descriptive; we did not conduct statistic tests to determine if these values are significantly different.

has state-funded pre-k slots, they discovered clear differences in the most common reasons for asking children to leave or take a break.9 We report these disaggregated data in Table 2. In the columns, we sort these data by whether the values are higher or lower than the percentage reported across all of the early educators who selected that reason (i.e., the "overall rate").** For example, let's focus on the first value in each column of the first row of Table 2. Of the early educators working in community-based centers who reported asking a child to leave or take a break, 91.7% endorsed not being able to meet the child's need for behavioral support as the reason why, which is higher than the overall rate of 84.0%. In contrast, of the early educators working in Head Start centers who reported asking a child to leave or take a break, 71.8% selected not being able to meet the child's need for behavioral support as the reason why, which is lower than the overall rate of 84.0%.

EDUCATORS: CONNECTIONS TO POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND RESOURCES

Two notable patterns emerge from reviewing these findings. Here, we draw connections between these findings and policies, practices, and resources related to reducing and eliminating the use of suspension and expulsion. For one, only 15.6% of early educators working in Head Start programs reported asking a child to leave or take a break. When they did, it was more likely to be because they couldn't meet the child's physical or medical needs, because the child moved into a special education classroom, or because the program hours did not match the family's needs. This is likely related to Head Start's policy that "[a] program must prohibit or severely limit the use of suspension due to a child's behavior".[13] Additionally, as part of Head Start policies, planned transitions of children to a more suitable setting are not considered to be expulsions. The finding for early educators working in Head Start programs is in contrast to that of early educators working in community-based, non-Head Start centers. In these settings, early educators were more likely to select reasons related to children's behavior for why they had asked children to leave or take a break. Together, these findings raise questions about what practices are used and what resources are available in Head Start programs that support Oregon's early educators to keep children with challenging behaviors in their classrooms? One possibility is that early educators working in Head Starts may have more access to more resources and services, such as infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMHC), compared to early educators working in other settings. Prior research provides evidence that accessing IEC-

13 Head Start Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center. (2023). 1302.17 Suspension and expulsion.

*Table 2. Of early educators who asked a child to leave or take a break in the last year, the percentage who selected each reason (rows), disaggregated by facility type, geographical location, and if the programs have state-funded slots. These values are compared to the overall rate per reason (columns)**.*

Reason	Overall Rate	More Likely to Endorse Compared to Overall Rate	Less Likely to Endorse Compared to Overall Rate
"Not able to meet child's need for behavioral support"	84.0%	Community-based center (not HS) (97.1%)	Head Start (71.8%) Oregon Prenatal to K. (72.6%) Preschool Promise (72.7%) Rual (76.1%) Family- or home-based child care (79.6%)
"Child's behavior was potentiall dangerous to other children"	73.7%	Community-based center (not HS) (81.9%)	Preschool Promise (60.6%) Family or home-based child care (61.5%) Early Interv./EC Sp. Edu. (63.6%) OR Prenatal to K (67.7%)
"Program hours did not match the family's needs"	31.0%	Head Start (50.0%) OR Prenatal to K. (48.4%) Early Interv./EC Sp. Edu. (36.4%)	Child care co-locatd in K-12 sch. (18.2%) Family- or home-based child care (20.4%)
"Family was no longer able to pay for care"	23.9%	Community-based center (not HS) (30.1%) Family- or home-based child care (28.6%)	Head Start (9.0%) OR Prenatal to K. (4.8%) Preschool Promise (12.1%)
"Child was placed in a special education classroom"	18.9%	OR Prental to K. (38.7%) Head Start (38.5%) Preschool Promise (24.2%)	Family- or home-based child care (8.2%) Early Interv./EC Sp. Edu. (9.1%)
"Not able to meet the child's physical needs"	18.4%	Head Start (23.1%)	Preschool Promise (3.05%) Family or home-based child care (10.2%) Rual (11.3%)
"Not able to meed the child's medical needs"	8.8%	Head Start (12.8%)	Preschool Promise (3.0%) Child care co-located in K-12 sch. (3.6%)

****Note: We report percentages that were 5% ore more above or below the overall rate of 19.3%. These findings are descriptive; we did not conduct statistic tests to determine if these values are significantly different.***

MHC reduces early educators' use of expulsion, both directly and indirectly (as summarized in a recent review7). Future research has the potential to reveal important information about how Oregon's DELC and early learning and care system can better support other center-based programs to reduce their use of exclusionary practices.

Another striking pattern is related to family- or home-based child care programs. The rate at which early educators in these facilities reported asking children to leave or to take a break (10.1%) was lower than the overall rate (19.3%). These early educators were also less likely to select reasons related to children's behaviors or to not being able to meet children's and families' needs. These findings are largely consistent with other recent studies. In one national study focused on home-based child care facilities, researchers found that 13.3% of early educators working in listed home-based settings reported expelling at least one child in the previous year.[14] In Maine, 15% of

14 Hooper, A., & Schweiker, C. (2020). Prevalence and predictors of expulsion in home based child care settings. Infant Mental Health Journal, 41, 411-425.

early educators in family child care settings reported having a child leave their program, compared to 42% of early educators in center-based settings.[15] Similarly, in Virginia, 17% of early educators at licensed day home care settings reported removing a child from their program, compared to 30% of early educators in licensed center-based settings who did so.[16] In Colorado, researchers report the rate of children removed from their early learning and care setting per 1,000 children[17] – rather than the percentage of early educators who reported asking a child to leave or take a break. Using this measure, these researchers discovered that the rate was higher for family- (35 per 1,000) versus center-based programs (6 per 1,000), although this is not directly comparable to the other studies cited here.

There are multiple potential factors that may be contributing to these differences – for example, family- and home-based programs tend to serve a smaller number of children and families, they are more likely to offer services in children and families' home language that's not English, and early educators in these setting may be more likely to be of the same racial/ethnic/cultural background as the families they serve. All of these factors have potential to improve the relationships among early educators, children, and families, which in turn could reduce the use of exclusionary practices. **It would be informative to hear directly from early educators and families in family- and home-based child care settings about what is working well** to support these educators to keep children in their programs and to use exclusionary practices at lower rates compared to the overall rate across all early educators. DELC could potentially then use this information to guide which resources they make available, policies they create, and practices they recommend across different types of child care settings.

One limitation of the study of Oregon early educators[9] is that the survey used one question to ask about leaving and taking a break, both permanently and temporarily. So, it is not possible to know from these data what percentages of early educators suspended (temporary) versus expelled (permanent) children from their programs in the last year. The survey also did not ask explicitly about planned transitions of children to more suitable programs nor did it distinguish planned transitions from expulsions. It would be valuable for researchers to explore these topics in future studies, since there is potential to reveal information that would inform designing policies and practices related to suspension and expulsion in more specific and nuanced ways.

EDUCATORS: CONNECTIONS TO WELLBEING

Additional recent research with Oregon's early educators points to the importance of their emotional wellbeing.[18,19,20]

---

15 Smith, S. and Granja, M.R. (2017) The voices of Maine's early care and education Teachers: Children with challenging behavior in classrooms and home-based child care. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.

16 Granja, M.R., Smith, S., Nguyen, U., and Grifa, B. (2018) Learning about young children's challenging behavior and impacts on programs and families: A State-wide survey of Virginia's early care and education teachers. New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University.

17 Hoover, S.D., et al. (2012). Influence of behavioral concerns and early childhood expulsions on the development of early childhood mental health consultation in Colorado. Infant Mental Health Journal, 33(3), 246-255.

18 Pears, K.C., et al. (2021). Survey on the effects of COVID-19 on Oregon's early care & education workforce and programs. Report submitted to the Oregon Early Learning Division and Early Learning Council, June 2021.

19 Schlieber, M., et al. (2022). Early educator voices: Oregon: Work environment conditions that impact early educator practice and program quality. Center for the Study of Child Care Employment. University of California, Berkeley. December, 2022.

20 Ginsberg, I., et al. (2023). Why home-based child care educators closed their doors: Learning from

These studies focused on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted and continues to impac wellbeing of early educators. Now that scientists understand more about the disease and children, families, and educators have routine access to vaccinations, the most highly contagious and detrimental phases of COVID-19 may be in the past (let's hope!). However, COVID-19 is not gone; in fact, there is a small COVID-19 surge in Oregon happening as we write this report (e.g., the number of COVID-19 hospitalizations has increased 20% in the past 2 weeks[21]). Moreover, people worldwide continue to experience both physical and emotional effects of living through the COVID-19 pandemic. This connects to suspension and expulsion because **early educators' emotional health and wellbeing are negatively associated with their use of exclusionary discipline practices** (as reported in a recent review[7]). When early educators' wellbeing is strained, they may be more likely to experience children's behaviors as challenging, have less bandwidth to respond in supportive, inclusive ways, and therefore be more likely to use exclusionary discipline practices. Thus, when addressing questions about what influences early educators to use or not use exclusionary discipline practices, it is critical to consider local, regional, statewide, national, and global factors that may impact people's wellbeing (e.g., other recent examples: the Portland Association of Teachers strike in Fall 2023,[22] the increasing xenophobia across the U.S.,[23] and the thousands of immigrants and refugees across countries and cultures who are "fleeing from war, oppression, and countless tragedies"[24]).

Table 3. Rates of being asked to leave or to take a break by race/ethnicity, language, and disability.

Category	2022 Household Survey	2020 Household Survey
Overall	9.1% All Children (in last year)	6.3% All Children (ever)
Race/Ethnicity	16.1% Afican American / Black 17.2% Nat. Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	9.0% Amer. Indian / Alaska Native 9.5% Hispanic / Latinx
Language	20.0% Mandarin speaking 15.8% Vietnamese speaking	10.1% Spanish speaking
Disability	22.1% children with IFSPs, developmental disabilites, or medical needs	14.7% children experiencing diabilites or chronic health conditions

***Note: We report percentages that were 5% ore more above or below the overall rate of 19.3%. These findings are descriptive; we did not conduct statistic tests to determine if these values are significantly different.*

COVID-19 to strengthen resilience in the early learning system. Report submitted to the Oregon Early Learning Division, March 2023.

21 Huang, J., et al. (2023). Track COVID-19 in Oregon. The New York Times. Updated: December 22, 2023.

22 Pate, N. (2023). What did Portland teachers get from their strike?. Oregon Public Broadcasting. November, 29, 2023.

23 Polner, R. (2023). NYU researchers map anti-Asian bias and xenophobia at state level. New York University. September 15, 2023.

24 Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (2023). World refugee day 2023. June 20, 2023.

In one recent statewide survey,[18] over one quarter of the early educators who responded (26.2%) reported "levels of anxiety that might indicate a clinical diagnosis," and 15.9% of early educators reported levels of depression that might indicate a clinical diagnosis. Furthermore, **early educators with higher levels of anxiety and depression also reported higher frequencies of feeling overwhelmed or burdened by children's behaviors**. While more research is needed to determine if one causes the other, this finding does provide initial support for a link between early educators' wellbeing and their potential use of exclusionary practices. Additionally, these findings are consistent with those from another statewide survey in Oregon,[19] where many early educators (over 60%) reported "feelings of negativity or anxiety about the future", and most (over 80%) reported experiencing recent changes in their sleep. Prior research has likewise shown a negative association between early educators' job stress or depression and their use of exclusionary discipline practices (as reported in a recent review7).

In two of these studies, early educators also reported experiencing financial distress.[19,20] In one recent study, researchers interviewed 15 Oregon early educators who permanently closed their child care businesses during COVID-19.[20] These educators shared their experiences of financial distress that resulted from having decreased income with families choosing to leave their programs along with increased costs of buying extra cleaning and safety supplies. In another recent study where Oregon early educators responded to a survey about their work environments,[19] more than half of these educators reported feeling worried about being able to pay their monthly bills or their housing costs. **Financial distress may also impact early educators' wellbeing, which in turn might increase their use of exclusionary practices.** In future studies, it would be important to talk with early educators about their experiences of wellbeing, factors that improve or worsen their wellbeing, and their understanding of how their wellbeing relates to the ways they provide care and to their use of suspension and expulsion.

The wellbeing of early educators can be directly impacted by policies and practices at both the local program level and at the state system level. For example, low wages and lack of benefits were common problems for the early learning and care workforce prior to COVID-19[25], and the pandemic made early educators' financial situations worse.[20] **As Oregon's DELC builds its ECSEPP, it must recognize and address current contexts that impact early educators' wellbeing**. Designing a system that meets the financial, physical, and mental health needs of early educators will help to create and maintain resiliency in Oregon's early learning and care workforce. Doing so has potential to reduce early educators' use of suspension and expulsion.

Children and families: Who in Oregon is or is not suspended or expelled? Why or why not?

In 2022, of the 3,705 Oregon families with young children who responded to a statewide survey about their early learning and care experiences, nearly 1 in 10 families (9.1%) reported that their child was asked to leave or to take a break, either permanently (expulsion) or temporarily (suspension), from their child care setting in the last year.[26] This reflects an increase from 2020, when 6.3% of families reported that their children were ever asked to leave or to take a break.[27] As one point of comparison, in the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health, 2.2% of parents

25 Burton, M., et al., (2019). Oregon Preschool Development Grant birth-age 5 strengths and needs assessment. Report submitted to the Oregon Early Learning Division and Early Learning Council, November, 2019.

26 Pears, K.C., Bruce, J., and Scheidt, D. (2023). Oregon Preschool Development Grant birth to age 5 strengths and needs assessment: 2022 statewide household survey results. Report submitted to the Oregon Early Learning Division and Early Learning Council, May 2023.

27 Pears, K.C., et al., (2021). Oregon Preschool Development Grant birth to age 5 strengths and needs assessment: 2020 statewide household survey results. Report submitted to the Oregon Early Learning Division and Early Learning Council, March 2021.

reported that their preschool-aged child had been suspended or expelled.[28]

Recent studies also clearly reveal that certain groups of Oregon children are disproportionately suspended or expelled. Table 3 shows the percentages of families – overall – who reported that their child was asked to leave or to take a break in the 2022 (9.1%) and 2020 (6.3%) statewide household surveys.[26,27] In 2022, of the families who reported their child was asked to leave or to take a break, more families reported their child was age 3 years or older (49.1%) compared to families who reported their child was age 0-2 years (30.8%) at the time they were asked to leave (although, 20% of families declined to answer the question about their child's age at the time of being asked to leave or take a break). Table 3 also includes the percentages of families – disaggregated by children's race/ethnicity, home language, and disability status – when the disaggregated value was higher than*** the overall percentage (see Appendix B for the full set of disaggregated data by race/ethnicity, language, and disability from both surveys).

For example, in 2022, of all families with African American or Black children, 16.1% of them reported that their child was asked to leave or to take a break in the last year. In another recent study, researchers discovered preliminary evidence that early educators asked African American or Black children to leave more than would be expected given their proportion of the general population.[9] Together, these findings show consistency between families' and early educators' reports – that African American or Black children in Oregon disproportionately experience being suspended or expelled from their early learning and care settings.

Strikingly, in both the 2022 survey[26] and 2020 survey[27], families with children experiencing disabilities or chronic health conditions reported the highest rates of having their child be asked to leave or to take a break (22.1% and 14.7%, respectively). Alarmingly, these values are considerably higher than those reported in two studies of data from the 2016 National Survey of Children's Health, where 5.4% of parents reported their preschool-aged child with disabilities had been suspended or expelled,[28] compared to 2.2% of all parents in the survey sample.[29] Across multiple listening sessions, families in Oregon with children experiencing disabilities have discussed their experiences of having their children suspended or expelled.[30,31] In one study, families who have children experiencing disabilities "shared that they had been asked to remove their child from care due to the educator's inability to support the child's [special] needs."[30] This reason was echoed by a parents in another study,[31] one of whom shared:

> *"...It was definitely a disability thing that they were not prepared for, to handle or take care of. I say easy, we're an easy target to get rid of. We just are. It's easy to say, 'This kid can't be here. We can't handle her.' Especially when you look at the makeup of the rest of the classroom."*

28 Zeng, S., et al. (2019). Adverse childhood experiences and preschool suspension expulsion: A population study. Child Abuse & Neglect, 97(104149), 1-9.

29 Zeng, S., et al. (2021). Preschool suspension and expulsion for young children with disabilities. Exceptional Children, 87(2), 199-216.

30 Burton, M., et al., (2020). Phase 2 family listening session full report: Hearing from Oregon's families about child care needs. Report to the Oregon Early Learning Division and the Early Learning Council.

31 Burton, M., et al., (2022). Families' experiences of early childhood care suspension and expulsion: Messages for building more inclusive environments. Report submitted to the Oregon Early Learning Division, July 2022.

These inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion – based on race/ethnicity, home language, and disabilities – emerge across multiple Oregon-based studies and over time, reflecting the degree and longevity of these issues. In prior research in other states and nationally, similar inequities have been documented – boys, African American or Black children, Hispanic or Latine children, and children experiencing disabilities are disproportionately suspended and expelled from their early learning and care settings, as well as from their kindergarten to grade 12 school environments (as synthesized in a recent review[7]).

When considering this set of findings, it is vital to remember – and therefore worth repeating – that **the root causes of these inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion are systemic**,[8] including implicit and explicit bias, a lack of knowledge about how to provide "support for social-emotional well- being at the individual child, family, classroom, and program level", and insufficient understanding of children's development, especially for children experiencing disabilities, developmental delays, chronic health conditions, or other medical needs. In other words, inequities in experiences of suspension and expulsion do NOT result from any inherent problems with or deficits of children in specific communities. As stated in House Bill 2166 (2021),[2] Oregon's leaders who are designing and implementing the ECSEPP must prioritize changing the system in ways that will reduce and eliminate these inequities.

FAMILIES: CONNECTIONS TO POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND RESOURCES

During interviews, 15 families shared their lived experiences of having their young child suspended or expelled from their early learning and care settings in Oregon.[31] Collectively, these families represented many marginalized communities – participants included African American, Hispanic/Latino, Mexican, Samoan, and White families, families who spoke Spanish and English, and families with children experiencing developmental disabilities or chronic medical needs. In their in-depth stories, these families revealed key insights into system-level factors that contributed to why children were asked to leave or to take a break (for a thorough review and discussion of systemic factors linked to exclusion, see Zinsser et al., 20227). For example, families described having early educators who lacked developmentally appropriate expectations of young children, limited access to services to support their children's additional social, emotional, or medical needs (e.g., Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education; EI/ECSE), and having staff turnover disrupt their relationships with their early educators. Families also shared what early educators said to them about why their child was being asked to leave – they described early educators communicating in indirect, often harmful ways, like relying on "euphemisms…for suspension and expulsion", such as the child is "not a good fit", is having a "hard time transitioning, or "is unable to meet these expectations." In some cases, families noted early educators' explicit gender-based biases and discrimination, which they viewed as reflecting early educators not valuing inclusion. Families drew connections between their experiences and policies, practices, and resources. They voiced potential policy changes, training and coaching they desired for their children's early educators, and resources they needed in order to change Oregon's early learning and care system to be more inclusive of their children and to better meet their children's needs.

During these same interviews[31], families also discussed what worked well about their early learning and care settings and their children's early educators. Families talked about strategies that their early educators used to try to keep their children in care, including having additional staff, having consistent staff, allowing flexible schedules, and using a specific framework, like the Pyramid Model. Despite these efforts, most (14 of the 15) families ultimately found new child care arrangements, which they described as being mostly better experiences for their children. They noted positive characteristics of these new environments and early educators that contributed to their children's successful transition to a new program, including smaller class sizes, more consistent and qualified staff, better communication, more intentionally designed physical spaces, and more willingness to provide individualized accommodations for children. Families again connected these traits to system-level policies, practices, and

resources, such as increasing funding for child care facilities, providing funding to support children's and families' transitions from one child care program to another, and revising policies related to early educator pay and benefits to reduce turnover in the early learning and care workforce. It could be informative for future research to engage early educators who have successfully kept a child in their program who was previously expelled from another early learning and care program, to learn more about which factors contributed to their ability to support the child's needs.

FAMILIES: CONNECTIONS TO WELLBEING

In another recent set of listening sessions[32], researchers talked with 58 Oregon families about their child care experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. These families collectively reflected multiple marginalized communities – participants included African American, Latinx, and Native American families, families living in frontier or rural regions, and families with children experiencing disabilities or health or medical needs. Not surprisingly, families described experiencing increased stress while navigating the pandemic – primarily from disruptions to their child care arrangements and decreases in their employment and income. Families also expressed concern about their children experiencing reduced quality child care and subsequent worry about their children's social-emotional development and readiness for kindergarten. Families identified resources and supports that were helpful, including mental health resources for adults, opportunities for social connection for both adults and children, receiving outreach and resources from their children's early learning and care educators, help meeting basic needs (e.g. food), and financial support. These findings raise questions about how families' experiences of stress might relate to children's experiences of exclusionary practices in their child care settings. For example, when adults in a family are experiencing greater levels of stress, are they less able to engage with and support their children? And in turn, does that negatively impact children's behavior at home and in their child care settings? How do families' stress levels affect their relationships with their children's early educators? This question is particularly important to answer given evidence that early educators' perceptions of and interactions with parents or families are related to children's risk of being suspended or expelled (as reported in a recent review[7]).

While conditions related to COVID-19 have improved dramatically since March 2020, families are still experiencing the effects it had on them and their lives. Plus, COVID-19 is still circulating. In addition, families experience many other sources of stress that strain their wellbeing. Families, just like early educators, may be dealing with situations and events at local, regional, statewide, national, and global levels that impact their wellbeing (e.g., these same recent examples may also have impacted families: the Portland Association of Teachers strike in Fall 2023,[22] the increasing xenophobia across the U.S.,[23] and the thousands of immigrants and refugees across countries and cultures who are "fleeing from war, oppression, and countless tragedies"[24]). So, it will be important for Oregon's DELC to consider how the ECSEPP will support families whose wellbeing is strained and what system-level resources they will provide to help families reduce their stress levels and improve their overall emotional health and wellbeing. It may be helpful for DELC to partner with folks at community-based organizations and other state agencies (e.g., Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Department of Education) who are already designing and implementing programs and services to support families' wellbeing.

STATE SYSTEM: HOW CAN OREGON'S EARLY LEARNING AND CARE SYSTEM BETTER SUPPORT EDUCATORS, FAMILIES, AND YOUNG CHILDREN?

Nearly all of the reports we reviewed for this baseline of knowledge include a section on recommendations and

32 Green, B., et al., (2020). Impacts of COVID-19 on families' experiences with child care: A summary of listening sessions with families with young children. Report to the Oregon Early Learning Division and the Early Learning Council.

next steps for policymakers, state system leaders, program directors, early educators, and/or families. Here, we synthesize across these recommendations. We emphasize how the synthesized set of recommendations, if implemented well, will help Oregon's early learning and care system to achieve its ultimate goal of eliminating the use of exclusionary discipline practices.

First, we want to highlight one specific report – Centering Racial Equity: Design Considerations for Oregon's Statewide Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) Program[8]. For this report, researchers interviewed Oregon professionals, including mental health consultants, mental health and early childhood program leaders, EI/ECSE staff, and early learning and care educators. They also interviewed national experts on IECMHC. The research team's charge was "to gather information that prioritized and centered the needs, experiences, and strengths of children, families, and early child care and education (ECE) educators of color." Therefore, most of the professionals and experts they engaged with were people of color. **This report contains a wealth of knowledge and should be a "go-to" resource for Oregon's DELC and everyone involved in designing and implementing the ECSEPP**. The "key design considerations'' that the research team articulates based on what they learned during the interviews can and should be applied not only to how DELC designs its IECMHC program but to the entire ECSEPP. We view these recommendations as so critically important that we re-print abbreviated versions of them here, and we urge all readers of the present report to explore and digest the full contents of the Centering Racial Equity report, too:
Key Design Considerations: [quoted directly from the Centering Racial Equity report[8]]

1. Ensure that the model uses an equity-based, holistic approach rooted in principles of racial equity and prevention…

2. Ensure a flexible model that can individualize consultation activities based on needs, strengths, and community context…

3. Provide sufficient on-site/classroom time and limit caseloads so that consultants and ECE educators can build the authentic, trusting relationships that are needed…

4. Ensure equitable access to consultants based on ECE educator needs and supported by a culturally responsive communication plan and systems that prioritize consultation for smaller programs…

5. Create formal templates for outlining services, roles, and expectations for IECMHCs and ECE educators, and include equity work as an expected component…

6. Develop, hire, and retain qualified BIPOC IECMHCs, who are (1) grounded in a shared history, culture, and language; (2) better positioned to overcome mistrust; and (3) have a deeper understanding and skills for navigating issues related to mental health within BIPOC communities…

7. Ensure that addressing implicit bias and racism is a core part of IECMHC services…

8. Allocate sufficient funds from the outset in building state infrastructure for program administration and contracting, technical support and workforce development, systems alignment and coordination, and data systems and evaluation…

9. Build support for ongoing, stable funding from as few sources as possible…

When we examined these "Key Design Considerations" in combination with the recommendations, implications, future directions, and next steps across all of the reports reviewed here, we identified the following three areas to prioritize and invest in as part of creating and launching the ECSEPP:

1. Build relationships among families, educators, TA educators, and DELC staff 2. Expand training, coaching, and consultation for early educators

3. Recruit and retain a more culturally and linguistically diverse workforce

In multiple prior studies, early educators, families, and researchers emphasize the **importance of relationships, especially for advancing equity, embodying anti-racism, and "working together for social justice"**.[33] Across projects, early educators expressed desire for peer learning networks where they could build community. Families desired opportunities to collaborate with early educators to support their children's learning and development, and early educators desired resources to support these types of partnerships. Many early educators and families also wanted to improve their relationships with TA educators and DELC staff. Early educators asked for DELC staff to see them as people and not just a business product. This would include investing in better wages and benefits for the early learning and care workforce and providing funds to support their operational costs. Families desired DELC to provide more and better resources with information about how to navigate Oregon's early learning and care system. By investing in building relationships, Oregon's early learning and care system leaders will support creating and maintaining a foundation for resource sharing and support, which in turn will likely help early educators to keep children in their programs.

Early educators and families also recommended **expanding opportunities for early educators to receive training, coaching, consultation, and other forms of professional development (PD)**. In addition to needing a greater number of PD opportunities, early educators and families recognize the **need for PD that is culturally and linguistically supportive and grounded**. They also strongly desire **more advanced training on trauma-informed ways to meet children's social-emotional, developmental, physical, and mental health needs**. Families, in particular, voiced how such training opportunities have the potential to support early educators' mindset shifts, increasing their understanding and valuing of inclusion for all children. Such changes and expansion in PD will likely align well with the ongoing reconceptualization of what it means to provide high-quality early learning and care programs and services, and the accompanying revision of Oregon's Quality Recognition and Improvement System (known as "Spark"). By investing in PD, Oregon's early learning and care system leaders will support early educators to build the knowledge and skills they need to more frequently keep children in their programs.

In many recent reports, researchers have concluded that Oregon's DELC **must prioritize recruiting and retaining early educators of color, early educators who speak multiple languages, and early educators who are part of other marginalized communities**, in order to better serve an increasingly diverse population of children and families in Oregon. Families also request that these early educators have training in meeting children's developmental needs, as there is currently a lack of service educators who speak multiple languages, for example. This would also support expanding EI/ECSE services and better integrating EI/ECSE into other existing early learning and care programs and services. Families and early educators point out that **equitable access to these resources will be a vital part** of ensuring that all children and families have access to the specific supports and resources that meet their needs. Having an early learning and care system with a greater number of early educators who are part of the communities that disproportionately experience suspension and expulsion will also help early educators to keep children in their programs.

Conclusion

"A serious discussion about social justice and health equity in America must start with reflection on the opportunities and access to resources we offer, and do

33 Mitchell, L. (2021). Multiracial coalitions to support system change: The Growing Master Trainers Pilot Project as an example of how we all win when we work together for equity. Portland, OR: Center for Improvement of Child & Family Services, Portland State University.

not offer, our youngest children, especially those from historically marginalized communities."[34]

As reflected in the quote above, the path towards creating a more just early learning and care system in Oregon (and everywhere) must start with providing children equitable access to high quality early learning and care programs and services. Oregon's DELC has an amazing opportunity to design and implement the ECSEPP in ways that center racial equity, transform the early learning system, and ultimately reduce and eliminate the use of exclusionary discipline practices by Oregon's early educators.

Appendix A: Key Terms and Definitions

[a]**Early educator (or "Early learning and care educator")**: individuals that care for young children needing child care as family, friend or neighbor or in license-exempt, regulated subsidy, registered family, certified family, and certified center environments.

[b]**Equity**: using the power of dominant systems to ensure that the needs of people in different communities – based on their age, disability status, ethnicity, gender identity, geographic location, income, language, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, and/or other demographic characteristics – are met by addressing systemic barriers including laws, policies, and other exclusionary programs and practices. Equity challenges a "one-size-fits-all" approach; instead, equity-based decisions rely on understanding and addressing how systemic barriers have differentially excluded communities from access to resources and opportunities.

[c]**Exclusionary practices**: any action taken by an early care and education program that limits the enrollment, participation, or attendance of a child due to the child's ability, needs, or behavior.

[c]**Expulsion**: permanently dismissing a child from their early care and education program.

[c]**Implicit bias**: the unconscious internal processes resulting in feelings and attitudes about people based on race, ethnicity, age, appearance, language, socioeconomic status, ability, religion, immigration status, gender or gender identity, and any other identity or intersectionality. These feelings and beliefs are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness.

[c]**Inclusion**: the values, policies, and practices that create opportunities for all young children and their families to participate in a broad range of activities and be supported to engage as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired result of inclusion is that children and their families of all races, ethnicities, ages, appearances, languages, socioeconomic statuses, abilities, religions, immigration statuses, genders or gender identities, and any other identities or intersectionalities, feel a sense of belonging, develop positive social relationships and friendships, and experience learning. The defining features of inclusion that can be used to identify high quality early childhood programs and services are access, participation, and supports.

[c]**Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (or "IECMHC")**: a prevention-based approach that pairs a mental health consultant with adults who work with infants and young children in the different settings where

34 Meek, S. E., and W. S. Gilliam. 2016. Expulsion and suspension in early education as matters of social justice and health equity. NAM Perspectives. Discussion Paper, National Academy of Medicine, Washington, DC.

they learn and grow, such as child care, preschool, home visiting, and early intervention. It employs a culturally responsive and trauma-informed lens and involves providing training and coaching to child care and early care and education educators that helps promote healthy social-emotional development, and which builds on child, family and educator strengths to ensure inclusive, supportive care for all children.

[b]**Justice**: transforming systems by removing oppressive barriers and building systems that work for all. These efforts are led by and centered in the desires, vision, timeframes, and strengths of communities most impacted by systemic inequities. These efforts can support and pair well with mainstream approaches towards equity. Still, they are first and foremost of, by, and for the community. Justice efforts focus attention toward sustainable community-led movements, organizations, and systems; they support the self-determination of communities to create the conditions for safety, wellness, and prosperity.

[b]**Research equity**: researchers, often working within or in partnership with dominant institutions, conduct research using methods and approaches that advance equity by centering and partnering with the communities most impacted by systemic inequities, while honoring their many ways of knowing and their lived experiences.

[c]**Suspension**: temporarily dismissing a young child from the early care and education environment, through In-program suspension or Out-of-program suspension.

[a.] "In-program suspension" means temporarily prohibiting the child from engaging in the classroom or group setting by sending the child to a different location within the program or building. In-program suspension does not include a Supported break.

[b.] "Out-of-program suspension" means dismissing or sending the child home early, prohibiting them from returning to the program for one or more days, or otherwise reducing the hours the child spends per week in the program.

Appendix B: Data from both household surveys

Table S1. Full set of disaggregated data for percent of families reporting their child was asked to leave or to take a break by race/ethnicity, language, and disability. (*=suppressed due to sample size of 5 or fewer)

Table 3. Rates of being asked to leave or to take a break by race/ethnicity, language, and disability.

Category	2022 Household Survey	2020 Household Survey
Overall	9.1% All Children (in last year)	6.3% All Children (ever)
Race/Ethnicity	16.1% Afican American / Black 17.2% Nat. Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	9.0% Amer. Indian / Alaska Native 9.5% Hispanic / Latinx
Language	20.0% Mandarin speaking 15.8% Vietnamese speaking	10.1% Spanish speaking
Disability	22.1% children with IFSPs, developmental disabilites, or medical needs	14.7% children experiencing diabilites or chronic health conditions

***Note: We report percentages that were 5% ore more above or below the overall rate of 19.3%. These findings are descriptive; we did not conduct statistic tests to determine if these values are significantly different.*

Appendix C

1.0 Interview and Focus Groups Questionnaire

ENGLISH QUESTIONS
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS – EDUCATORS

[Suspension &Expulsion] We know that child care educators can often struggle with knowing how to support children showing special behavioral, physical, and mental health needs. And we know this often results in not enrolling the child in the program, asking a child to leave a program, or referring the child to another program.

1. Tell me about how you work with kiddos with big behaviors, or those with other physical and mental health needs?
2. How do you decide which kiddos you take into your program and which ones you don't?
3. What have you learned in the past that's helped you in these situations?
4. How does your approach vary for infants and toddlers?

[Capacity Building] We know that educators want more opportunities to improve their quality of care and approaches to care, especially for children showing special behavioral, physical, and mental health needs.

1. [formal] What kinds of professional development and technical assistance experiences would help you better serve children showing special behavioral, physical, and mental health needs?
    a. Prompts:
        i. Apprenticeships, job shadowing, visiting other centers; site visits; observing a classroom with special ed teachers; Pairing you up so you can go visit others – mutual learning [we don't want another burden]
        ii. How would you want to be trained so you feel more confident in identifying specific supports that are needed for a child?
        iii. What professional support would help you better support children?
2. [informal] What kinds of networks, social supports, and other peer learning opportunities would help you better serve children showing special behavioral, physical, and mental health needs?
    a. Prompts: How can the **CCR&R support this**? Resource needed? Right Process?

[Specialist Visits] We know that there is a need for additional visitation time by specialists and a desire for these visits to be more valuable. Specialists could be: Inclusion specialist/coach, Equity specialist, speech pathologist, early learning specialist/coach, mental health specialist.

1. Tell me about a good experience you've had with specialists.

[Relationships]
1. Can you give me an example of what this looks like with families whose kids are showing "challenging" or "big" behaviors?

[Burden & Decreased Capacity] We know that administrative burden and the demands of this work can lead to educators' decreased capacity to access needed resources and support. This is especially amplified in regions where there are child care deserts.

Educators

1. How has this impacted your access to resources and support you can provide to families?
2. How can programs that provide supplemental funds like USDA, ERDC, PP, Food Programs minimize the administrative burden on educators?

[S&E Ban] The Oregon Legislature passed a bill (SB236 - Executive Summary) that "prohibits any early care and education program that is either licensed or receiving public funds from suspending or expelling any child as of July 1, 2026."

Educators

1. What needs to be put into place before this happens so you feel prepared for it?
    a. Prompts: training campaigns (for everybody CCR&R, educators, families)
2. Can you tell me about your experience working with kids from different linguistic or cultural backgrounds?
3. Are there supports you need to better serve those kiddos?

[Demographics]

1. How do you identify your race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, country of origin, or ancestry?
2. What are the languages and race/ethnicities of the children you work with?
3. What is the program size?

Certified center or license-exempt center?

(Interview Questions – Educators in Spanish)
PREGUNTAS DE LA ENTREVISTA: EDUCADORES

Suspensión y Expulsión y Construcción de Relaciones:

- Cuénteme cómo trabaja con niños con comportamientos que son fuertes o con otras necesidades de salud física y mental.
    - Aviso: ¿Cómo decide qué niños aceptan en su programa y cuáles no?
    - Aviso: ¿Qué han aprendido en el pasado que le haya ayudado en estas situaciones?
- ¿Cómo son sus enfoques sobre la socialización y el apoyo al desarrollo de bebés y niños pequeños?
    - Aviso: ¿Está cubierto el costo de esa atención y capacitación?
    - Aviso: ¿Qué falta para cubrirlo?
- ¿Qué prácticas mantienen y han sido útiles para construir relaciones con las familias?

Desarrollo de capacidades:

- Por favor comparta con nosotros los tipos de desarrollo profesional y sistemas de apoyo social que le ayudarían a atender mejor a los niños con necesidades especiales de salud mental, física y conductual?
    - Aviso: Esto puede consistir en asistencia técnica, oportunidades de aprendizaje entre pares, aprendizajes, etc.

Visitas de especialistas:

Cuéntame ¿qué es una buena experiencia con especialistas? Especialista/entrenador en inclusión, especialista en equidad, logopeda, especialista en aprendizaje temprano, especialista en salud mental etc.

Trámites y trabajo con sistemas:

- ¿Cómo le han impactado el papeleo y los sistemas en línea su acceso a los recursos?
    - Aviso: ¿Cómo le han impactado en el apoyo que puede brindar a las familias?
- ¿Hay áreas que son redundantes y frustrantes? Si es así, ¿cómo se pueden simplificar o diseñar para apoyarles?
    - Aviso: Programas como ERDC, Preschool Promise y Programas de Alimentos, etc.

Prohibición de S&E: La Legislatura de Oregón aprobó un proyecto de ley (SB236 - Resumen Ejecutivo) que "prohíbe que cualquier programa de educación y cuidado temprano que tenga licencia o reciba fondos públicos suspenda o expulse a cualquier niño a partir del 1 de julio de 2026".

- ¿Qué se debe implementar antes de que se prohíba S&E para que usted se sienta preparado para el cambio?
- ¿Hay algo que le gustaría compartir sobre su experiencia con S&E?

[FIN/CIERRE – AL]

2.0 Resource Mapping Survey Copy

INTRODUCTION

Informed consent: Thank you for taking time to complete the Oregon Child Care Educators' Resource Mapping Survey, administered by the. The goal of this survey is to collect statewide experiences of child care educators to identify which resources educators have access to, rely on, gaps in available resources, desired technical assistance and other resources educators need to inform the development of the new Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program. This program will provide statewide support and resources to aid child care educators to prevent the use of suspension and expulsion which will be banned starting on July 1, 2026. If you would like more information about the statewide research the Coalition of Communities of Color is conducting to support these efforts, here. Your responses to the following survey questions will be anonymized and any personal, identifiable information will not be shared. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. Survey participants will receive a $25 digital gift card, once their status as a child care educator is confirmed. Results of the survey will be shared with the state legislature and available to the public by January 2025. By continuing, you agree to participate in the Oregon Child Care Educators' Resource Mapping Survey. For more information about this survey and other research efforts to support this work please contact Drs. Andres Lopez and Mira Mohsini: andres@coalitioncommunitiescolor.org and mira@coalitioncommunitiescolor.org. For more information about the Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion Prevention Program, please contact Jon Reeves: jon.reeves@delc.oregon.gov. For more information about statewide supports, please contact Erin Kinavey Wennerstorm: erin@or-imha.org.

Q1 1a. What is the ZIP code of your workplace? Enter 5 digit ZIP Code. The purpose of this question is to get a statewide picture of where educators' workplaces are located. This information will be mapped, but business names will not be connected to zip codes.

Q1 1b. What is the ZIP code of your home residence? Enter 5 digit ZIP Code. The purpose of this question is to get a statewide picture of where educators live compared to where they are working. This information WILL NOT be mapped, but analysis will be done to understand the average distance from educators' residences to their workplaces.

Q2 2. Have you heard about any of these initiatives to build a substitute pool for child care?

- ☐ Support services for child care programs
- ☐ Baby Promise child care programs
- ☐ Preschool Promise child care programs
- ☐ OPK, Head Start, and Early Head Start programs
- ☐ Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Programs (EHS-CCP)
- ☐ School District PreK programs
- ☐ Other Indirect resources

INDIRECT RESOURCES

Q6. What specific indirect resources have you utilized?

☐ ORO Training Calendar (a source for information about upcoming trainings)

☐ Other, please specify _____

Q_indirect In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource.

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
ORO Training Calendar (a source for information about upcoming trainings)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

SCHOOL DISTRICT PREK

Q6 What specific School District PreK programs have you utilized?

☐ Early Intervention Specialist

☐ Early Childhood Special Education Specialist

☐ School District Behavior Specialist

☐ Inclusion Specialist

☐ Other, please specify _____

Q36 In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource.

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Early Intervention Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
School District Behavior Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Early Head Start Child Care Partnership

Q6 What specific Early Head Start Child Care Partnership program resources have you utilized?

- ☐ Family Services Navigator
- ☐ Home Visitor
- ☐ Nutrition Specialist
- ☐ Disabilities Specialists
- ☐ Family Services Specialist
- ☐ Mental Health Specialists
- ☐ Education Specialists
- ☐ Coaches
- ☐ Inclusion Specialist
- ☐ Behavior Specialist
- ☐ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

Q_EHStart In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource.

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Family Services Navigator	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Home Visitor	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Nutrition Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Disabilities Specialists	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Family Services Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Mental Health Specialists	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Education Specialists	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Coaches	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Inclusion Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Behavior Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Q6 What specific Early Head Start Child Care Partnership community resources have you utilized?

- ☐ Early Intervention Specialist
- ☐ Early Childhood Special Education Specialist
- ☐ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

Q_EHStart_community In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource. OPK, Head

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Early Intervention Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Start, and Early Head Start program

Q6 What specific OPK, Head Start, and Early Head Start program resources have you utilized?

- ☐ Family Services Navigator
- ☐ Home Visitor
- ☐ Nutrition Specialist
- ☐ Disabilities Specialists
- ☐ Family Services
- ☐ Mental Health Specialists

- ☐ Education Specialists
- ☐ Coaches
- ☐ Inclusion Specialist
- ☐ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

Q_OPK In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource.

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Family Services Navigator	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Home Visitor	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Nutrition Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Disabilities Specialists	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Family Services Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Mental Health Specialists	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Education Specialists	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Coaches	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Inclusion Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Q6 What specific OPK, Head Start, and Early Head Start community resources have you utilized?

- ☐ Early Intervention Specialist
- ☐ Early Childhood Special Education Specialist
- ☐ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

Q_OPK_community In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource.

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Early Intervention Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Preschool Promise Child

Q6 What specific Child care programs have you utilized?

- ☐ Preschool Promise Coach (CCR&R)
- ☐ Preschool Promise Quality Specialist (CCR&R)
- ☐ Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinator (CCR&R)

- ☐ State & Regional Inclusive Partner
- ☐ Early Intervention Specialist
- ☐ Early Childhood Special Education Specialist
- ☐ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- ☐ Early Learning Hubs
- ☐ Other, please specify

Q_Preshool In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource.

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Preschool Promise Coach (CCR&R)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Preschool Promise Quality Specialist (CCR&R)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Focused Child Care Network (FCCN)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Coordinator (CCR&R)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
State & Regional Inclusive Partner	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Intervention Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Learning Hubs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Baby Promise child care

Q6 What specific Baby Promise child care programs have you utilized?

- ☐ Baby Promise Coach
- ☐ Baby Promise Infant Toddler Specialist
- ☐ Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinator (CCR&R)
- ☐ State & Regional Inclusive Partner
- ☐ Early Intervention Specialist
- ☐ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- ☐ Other, please specify

Q_Baby In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource.

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Baby Promise Coach	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Baby Promise Infant Toddler Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinator (CCR&R)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
State & Regional Inclusive Partner	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Intervention Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Support services for Child Care Programs

Q6 What specific Support services for child care programs have you utilized?

- ☐ Quality Improvement Specialist (CCR&R)
- ☐ Infant Toddler Specialist (CCR&R)
- ☐ Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinator (CCR&R)
- ☐ State & Regional Inclusive Partner
- ☐ Early Intervention Specialist
- ☐ Early Childhood Special Education Specialist
- ☐ Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant
- ☐ Preschool for All Coach (CCR&R, Multnomah County Preschool for All programs only)
- ☐ Preschool for All Mental Health Consultant (Multnomah County Preschool for All programs only)
- ☐ Child Care Substitutes of Oregon (TRI)
- ☐ Other, please specify

Q_support_services In the resource you utilize, rate how satisfied your were with the support you received on a scale of 1 (very dissatisfied) to 5 (very satisfied). Next, describe your experience using this resource.

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Quality Improvement Specialist (CCR&R)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Infant Toddler Specialist (CCR&R)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Focused Child Care Network (FCCN) Coordinator (CCR&R)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
State & Regional Inclusive Partner	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Intervention Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Early Childhood Special Education Specialist	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Resource	Rate resource usefulness here					Describe your experience here
	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Answer 1
Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Preschool for All Coach (CCR&R, Multnomah County Preschool for All programs only)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Preschool for All Mental Health Consultant (Multnomah County Preschool for All programs only)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Child Care Substitutes of Oregon (TRI)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	
Other, please specify	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	

Qualitative Questions

Q7 We know that child care educators can often struggle with knowing how to support children showing special behavioral, physical, and mental health needs. And we know this often results in not enrolling the child in the program, asking a child to leave a program, or referring the child to another program.

Please share a little bit with us about how...

	Please describe your experience:
How did you approach this problem in the past?	
If you had all the resources available to you, how would you approach or address the problem?	
What support would you need to guide you?	
Describe any other supports you desire to help prevent suspending or expelling that you haven't already shared about.	

Q8 If you had access to the support and technical assistance you needed, what would you do with the time and capacity that would provide? (e.g., buying supplies, cleaning the center, selfcare filling out paperwork)

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q9 Is there anything else you wish to share about the resources or technical assistance you have received in the past or wish to receive in the future?

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Q10 Are you interested in taking part in a follow up interview or focus group which will help develop the programs to support child care educators once the ban is in place?

☐ If yes please provide your email below: _____

☐ Not at this time.

Demographic information

Q1 1. How do you identify your race, ethnicity, tribal affiliation, country of origin or ancestry?
_____

Q2 2. Which of the following describes your racial or ethnic identity? Please check ALL that apply.

☐ American Indian

☐ Alaska Native

☐ Canadian Inuit, Metis, or First Nation

☐ Indigenous Mexican, Central American, or South American

☐ Asian Indian

☐ Cambodian

☐ Chinese

☐ Communities of Myanmar

☐ Filipino/a

☐ Hmong

- ☐ Japanese
- ☐ Korean
- ☐ Laotian
- ☐ South Asian
- ☐ Vietnamese
- ☐ Other Asian
- ☐ African American
- ☐ Afro-Caribbean
- ☐ Ethiopian
- ☐ Somali
- ☐ Other African (Black)
- ☐ Other Black
- ☐ Central American
- ☐ Mexican
- ☐ South American
- ☐ Other Hispanic or Latino/a/x
- ☐ Chamoru (Chamorro)
- ☐ Marshallese
- ☐ Communities of the Micronesian Region
- ☐ Native Hawaiian
- ☐ Samoan
- ☐ Other Pacific Islander
- ☐ Middle Eastern
- ☐ North African
- ☐ Eastern European
- ☐ Slavic
- ☐ Western European
- ☐ Other White
- ☐ Other (please list) _____
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Don't want to answer

Q3 3. If you checked more than one category above, is there one you think of as your primary racial or ethnic identity?

- ☐ Yes. Please write your primary racial or ethnic identity below: _____

- ☐ I do not have just one primary racial or ethnic identity
- ☐ No. I identify as Biracial or Multiracial.
- ☐ N/A. I only checked one category above
- ☐ Don't know
- ☐ Don't want to answer

Q4 4. How old are you? (Only use numbers)

_____

Q5 5. Please describe your gender in any way you prefer:

_____

Q6 6. Please describe your sexual orientation or sexual identity in any way you want:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Endnotes

1 81st O.R. Legislative Assembly. House Bill 2166. Regular Session 2021.

2 81st O.R. Legislative Assembly. Senate Bill 236. Regular Session 2021.

3 Coalition of Communities of Color. (2023). "Suspension and Expulsion in Oregon's Early Learning and Care System: A baseline of knowledge report submitted to Oregon's Department of Early Learning and Care." Portland, Oregon: Coalition of Communities of Color.

4 The full Baseline of Knowledge report can be found in the Appendix B. We also provide an overview of the main findings of the report in Chapter Three along with some updated numbers that have been released since that report was written.

5 Harding, Sandra. (2005). "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is "Strong Objectivity?" Feminist Theory: A Philosophical Anthology. Ed. Cudd, Ann E. and Robin O. Andreasen, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

6 Oregon Child Care Research Partnership. (2023). *Early Care and Education Profile: State of Oregon* 2022. Oregon State University. Pg. 3.

7 Oregon Child Care Research Partnership. (2023). *Early Care and Education Profile: State of Oregon* 2022. Oregon State University. Pg. 3.

8 Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division (2019). T*he State of Early Care & Education and Child Care Assistance in Oregon. A report submitted by the Early Learning Division to the Legislative Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care.* December, 2019. Pg. 1.

9 Rodriguez-JenKins, J., et al., (2022). *Centering Racial Equity: Design Considerations for Oregon's Statewide Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program.* Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services, School of Social Work, Portland State University. [Final Report to Oregon Department of Education: Early Learning Division]. Pg. 34.

10 Pears, K.C., et al., (2022). *Findings from Oregon's Early Childhood Care Educator Survey 2022: Challenges and Opportunities for Professional Development and Coaching.* Pg. 4.

11 Gilliam, W. S. (2005). *Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion rates in state prekindergarten programs.* FCD Policy Brief Series, 3.

12 Gilliam, W. S. (2005). Table 4. *Expulsion rates for prekindergarten and K-12 by state.* FCD Policy Brief Series, 3.

13 Pears, K.C., et al., (2022). *Findings from Oregon's Early Childhood Care Educator Survey 2022: Challenges and Opportunities for Professional Development and Coaching.* Pg. 16.

14 Pears, K.C., et al., (2022). *Findings from Oregon's Early Childhood Care Educator Survey 2022: Challenges and Opportunities for Professional Development and Coaching.* Pg. 8.

15 Pears, K.C., Bruce, J., and Scheidt, D. (2023). *Oregon Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment Birth through 5: 2022 Statewide Household Survey Results.* Pg. 11.

16 Pears, K.C., et al., (2021). *Oregon Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment Birth through 5: 2022 Statewide Household Survey Results.*

17 Zeng, S., et al. (2019). *Adverse childhood experiences and preschool suspension expulsion: A population study.* Child Abuse & Neglect, 97(104149), 1-9.

18 Pears, K.C., Bruce, J., and Scheidt, D. (2023). *Oregon Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment Birth through 5: 2022 Statewide Household Survey Results.*

19 Pears, K.C., et al., (2021). *Oregon Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment Birth through 5: 2022 Statewide Household Survey Results.*

20 Pears, K.C., et al., (2022). *Findings from Oregon's Early Childhood Care Educator Survey 2022: Challenges and Opportunities for Professional Development and Coaching.* Pg. 11.

21 Pears, K.C., Bruce, J., and Scheidt, D. (2023). *Oregon Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment Birth through 5: 2022 Statewide Household Survey Results.*

22 Pears, K.C., et al., (2021). *Oregon Preschool Development Grant Needs Assessment Birth through 5: 2022 Statewide Household Survey Results.*

23 Zeng, S., et al. (2019). *Adverse childhood experiences and preschool suspension expulsion: A population study.* Child Abuse & Neglect, 97(104149), 1-9.

24 Zeng, S., et al. (2021). *Preschool Suspension and Expulsion for Young Children With Disabilities.* Exceptional Children, 87(2), 199-216.

25 Burton, M., et al., (2020). *Phase 2 family listening session full report: Hearing from Oregon's families about child care needs.* Report to the Oregon Early Learning Division and the Early Learning Council. Pg. 2.

26 Burton, M., et al., (2022). *Families' Experiences of Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion: Messages for Building More Inclusive Environments.* Report to the Oregon Early Learning Division. Pg. 10.

27 Burton, M., et al., (2022). *Families' Experiences of Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion: Messages for Building More Inclusive Environments.* Report to the Oregon Early Learning Division. Pg. 20.

28 Gilliam, W. S. (2005). Prekindergarteners left behind: Expulsion rates in state prekindergarten programs. FCD Policy Brief Series, 3.

29 Rodriguez-JenKins, J., et al., (2022). *Centering Racial Equity: Design Considerations for Oregon's Statewide Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) program.* Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services, School of Social Work, Portland State University. [Final Report to Oregon Department of Education: Early Learning Division]. Pg. 34.

30 81st O.R. Legislative Assembly. House Bill 2166. Regular Session 2021.

31 Oregon Office of Rural Health. (n.d.). Oregon zip codes urban rural Designations. https://www.oregon.gov/oha/HSD/AMHPAC/Documents/OR-Zip-Codes-Urban-Rural-Designations.pdf