



OREGON HEAD START ASSOCIATION

Investing in Head Start is Investing in Oregon's Future

Testimony for the House Early Childhood and Family Supports Committee

Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten is a program for children and families who live in poverty. You will find a Head Start program in each county around the state with several programs in the Portland area.

One aspect of the program is to provide preschool that prepares children for Kindergarten. Without Head Start, these children would not have access to preschool and, therefore, not ready for Kindergarten.

In addition to education services, children receive screenings within 45 days of enrollment. The screenings include dental, health, and all domains of development. Children who are screened and show a potential delay are referred to Early Childhood Special Education. Special Education services are often provided at Head Start sites.

Children are not the only ones who receive services at Head Start. Families receive home visits and create goals for their families. They are also connected with services that they may not have, but are entitled to. Family advocates are available to assist families in crisis. They may need help with housing, food, clothing, the basic needs that families need to survive.

Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten (OPK) currently serves 14,000 children (62% of eligible children), over 8,000 of those children are funded with OPK dollars from the Oregon Legislature and the balance are funded with federal Head Start dollars. Over the last several bienniums, the Oregon Legislature has increased funding for OPK Head Start, which has increased the access to quality preschool services for impoverished children.

Included in this testimony is a report from the Early Learning Division on the aggregated data from the child assessment program that Head Start uses to assess children three times a year. The report clearly shows the gains that

children achieve over the year and that they are ready for Kindergarten when they leave.

The report also shows that Hispanic children, African American children, English Language learners and children with disabilities all make gains that either meet or exceed expectations. This means that Head Start has given these children the skills they need to be successful in Kindergarten.

Currently there are 1,777 children on the waiting list to get into Head Start. These children will not receive the education that they need to be ready for Kindergarten. This is why the Oregon Head Start Association continues to request expansion dollars. We want all eligible children in Oregon to have a quality preschool experience.

Head Start wants to support workforce development for early childhood staff. There is a need for more qualified staff and a need for education to increase the workforce.

The Oregon Legislature has made a huge investment in Head Start. This investment is making a difference. Families' lives are changed and children have the hope for a successful future in elementary school and beyond.

Respectfully Submitted by:

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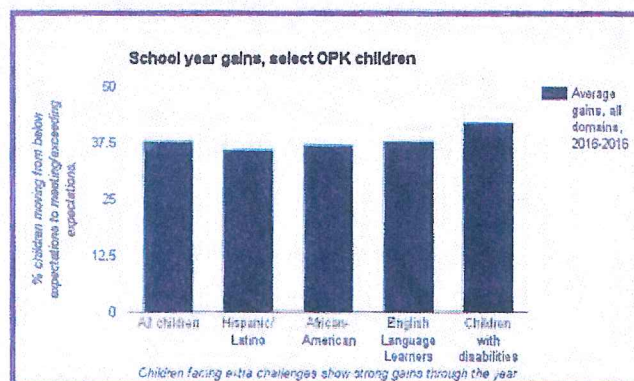
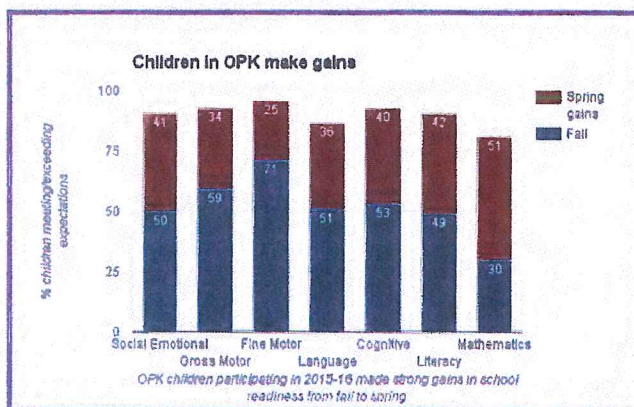
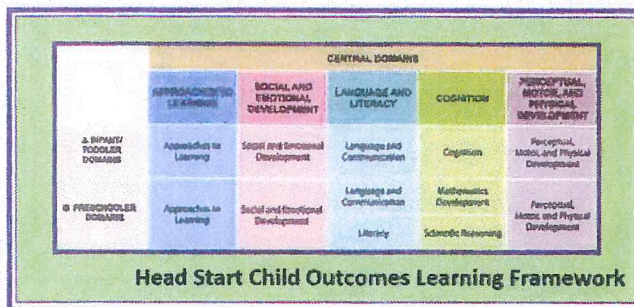
E. Student progress and outcomes (The effectiveness of the preschool program)

We know from a great deal of research and experience that Head Start works. Researchers' most comprehensive examination, the Head Start Impact Study, found

"Providing access to Head Start has a positive impact on children's preschool experiences. There are statistically significant differences between the Head Start group and the control group on every measure of children's preschool experiences measured in this study."⁴

Oregon's partnership with federal Head Start orients local agencies to a highly effective program model.

The Oregon Legislature designated the Head Start Child Outcomes Learning Framework as our early learning standards. OPK programs help children develop skills in the six domains detailed here: how young children learn, feel, communicate, think, and move. OPK programs assess children in these domains multiple times a year. Teachers and parents observe children carefully, listen to their words, and ask them questions. Teachers use these



⁴ Puma, M., Bell, S., Cook, R., Heid, C., Shapiro, G., Broene, P., ... & Ciarico, J. (2010). Head Start Impact Study. Final Report. Administration for Children & Families.

observations to assess children in each domain. ELD collects and analyzes the assessment data, from which we learn about effective practices and initiatives. ELD provides assistance to programs to improve child outcomes.

ELD and its partner OPK grantees take seriously our commitment to equity—prioritizing supports for children and families farthest from opportunity. Teachers provide culturally responsive curricula and environments, learning about each family and planning to meet the needs of every child. We see strong developmental gains by children facing extra challenges: learning English as a second language; marginalized by racism; coping with disabilities.

