

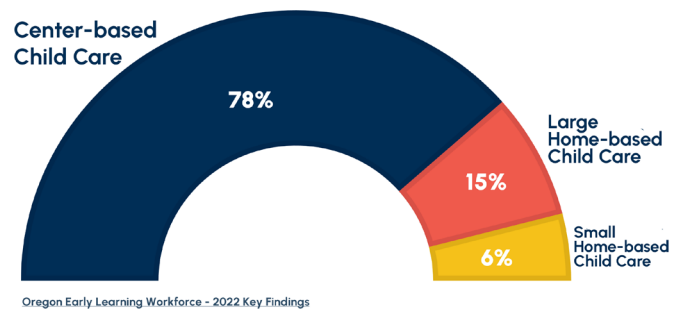
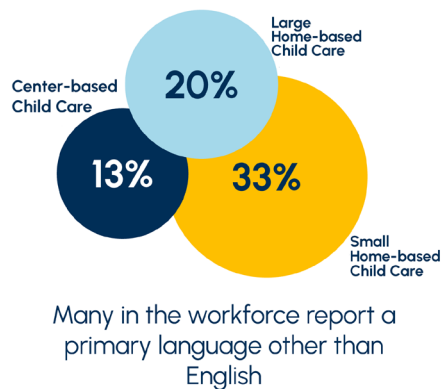
# Early Childhood Workforce and Professional Learning System

Recruiting and retaining the workforce that supports all other workforces.



## Who is the Early Childhood Workforce?

The early childhood workforce is comprised of a wide variety of professionals dedicated to providing care and education to young children and supporting their families and communities. The workforce most commonly recognized in the early learning and care field are the teachers, assistants, family child care providers, and administrators overseeing early learning programs. There are 23,988 individuals working in regulated child care programs as of 2022. There is also a workforce that surrounds and supports those that work directly with children, including child care licensing specialists, coaches and mentors, home visitors, specialized staff like early childhood interventionists, and a growing field of infant and early childhood mental health, inclusion, and infant toddler specialists.



Professional learning is an integral component of the early learning system that directly supports all of these positions to excel in their field of expertise. The strategies that are implemented by the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) strengthen their existing skills and helping to ensure that Oregon continues to recruit, onboard and retain this critical workforce.

## Why Professional Learning and Workforce Supports Matter

While the early childhood workforce faces many barriers, professional learning equips individuals to enter the workforce prepared, stay current on the latest research and best practices, and develop new skills. Ultimately this leads to the operation of high-quality programs, improved learning experiences for children, and better outcomes overall for young children, families, and communities. Professional learning is crucial for the early learning and care workforce, and this workforce is absolutely necessary to support all other workforces. Families need accessible, affordable, quality, inclusive care that meets their needs and aligns with their values so that they can go to work.

*"By investing in the childcare industry and supporting providers, Oregon can not only improve access to quality care for families but also create economic opportunities and support the state's overall economic growth."*  
Oregon 2024 Talent Assessment

## What Professional Learning and Workforce Supports Looks Like

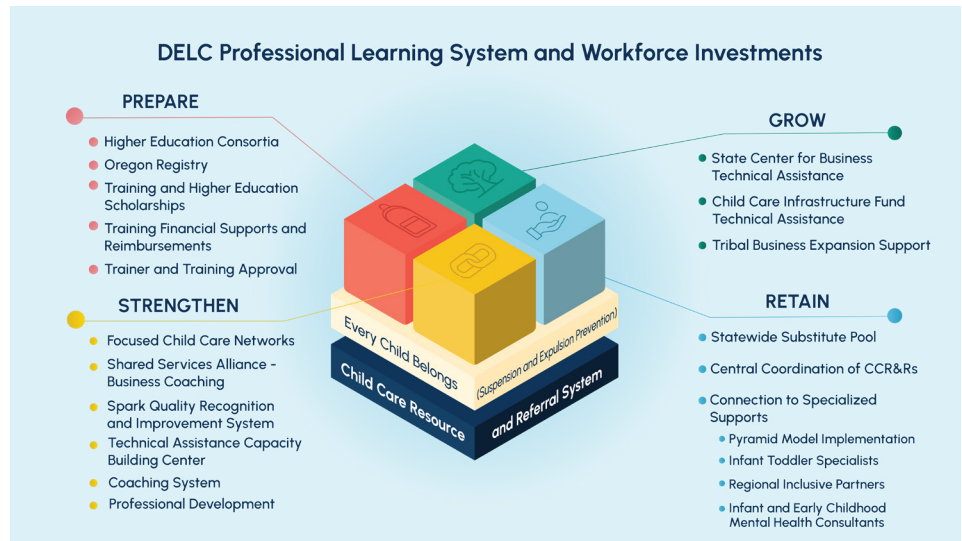
DELC utilizes the [National Association for the Education of Young Children's guidance on training and technical assistance](#) as a foundation to structure the system of professional learning. From there, DELC has developed a framework that guides the investment of resources into systems and community organizations. Developing a diverse, culturally responsive and highly qualified workforce is an intensive, ongoing process that involves recruitment, retention, and ongoing professional development. The Professional Learning System Office at DELC leads the development of the system to implement equitable workforce investments and build statewide professional learning initiatives that prepare, grow, strengthen and retain a qualified workforce.

DELC funds a statewide system of 15 regionally-based Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) organizations. These local organizations are the foundation for much of the professional learning

and workforce strategies that are funded by DELC. Each CCR&R has expertise in supporting early learning and care programs in their journey to develop and increase quality of child care. They provide training, one-on-one and group learning, relationship-based support and coaching to recruit and retain early educators and build strong early learning and care programs across the state.

The DELC Professional Learning System Office invests in statewide initiatives that support early educators to:

- Build their capacity
- Access higher education that is subsidized and accessible
- Create business plans and build a sustainable model
- Access intensive peer learning cohorts to build skills and competencies
- Receive full support when they are struggling to keep children in care when behaviors are identified as challenging
- Access a growing statewide substitute pool to address staffing shortages of programs,
- Engage in quality improvement systems that identify and celebrate the unique strengths of early learning and care programs.



For more information please contact

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