

# Common Ecosystem Conditions Helping vs. Hindering



The Oregon Early Learning Division defines Objective 2 in Raise Up Oregon as: “family have access to high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate) affordable early care and education that meets their needs.”

We have explored common Ecosystem Conditions for Objective 2 which include environment resources, human resources, financial resources, program and opportunity components, policies and practices, connections, decision-making, goals, shared mindsets. Our EL Hub has summarized partner feedback on what is helping and what is hindering this objective in our region.



- ✓ Community partnerships available in Albany are helpful.
- ✓ Great opportunities for natural resource access.
- ✓ FAR Waiver.

### Environment

- ✓ Improved coordination and integration between SD, preschools, K-12, community partnerships, LBCC, OSU.
- ✓ Some scholarship dollars and strong professional experience are available in the region.
- ✓ Inclusive practices go well.
- ✓ Training for preschool staffs is strong in the area.

### Human Resources

- ✓ Increased funding opportunities.
- ✓ The importance and the major impact of Preschool Promise and its support for community providers.
- ✓ Partnerships help program a reality.

### Financial Resources

- ✓ A lot of high quality programs in the LBL region.
- ✓ Good collaboration among partners and agencies.
- ✓ Co-location and locally programs.
- ✓ EI/ECSE is the same program in LBL.

### Program & Opportunity Components

#### Rural Communities

- Lack of Internet or other technologies.
- Lack of infrastructure and available services.
- Lack of consideration of the spreading out of areas, for example, Lincoln County.

#### Lack of Facilities

- Affordable facilities on the coast.
- Expansion of housing without considering EC services.
- High-cost, licensing, loans, insurance, zoning barriers for small providers.
- Facility location vs. high needs population.

#### Children engaging with the environment

- Lack of availability of natural spaces, parks, pedestrian and biking infrastructure.
- Lack of clean soil for gardens and play.

#### Lack of Educators and staff

- Shortage of educators and staffs.
- Wage gap, benefit deficit, and lack of incentives.
- Lack of supports and funding to recruit new staff and retain quality staff.
- Lack of supports for culturally diverse workforce and cultural needs from children and families.

#### Training and coaching

- Lack of training and coaching for existing staff to improve their practices.
- Lack of mental and behavioral health specialists and services for children and families.

#### Funding & Programs

- Restriction vs. flexibility of funding sources.
- Lack of State grants support for staff and to make programs sustainable.
- Need additional business investment for employee retainment.
- State regulates so heavily and with such complexity.
- Without full knowledge of content area before using the funding (look at all funding streams as a whole if possible).
- Need more funding to help to decrease tuition.
- Profitable vs. Affordable.
- Is a program family or child centered?
- Is a program of high quality?

#### Other financial needs and concerns

- Transportation for all families.
- Restriction of funding sources to build and renovate facilities.
- Additional investments in infant-toddler care options.
- More supports for school districts at Preschool and Kindergarten education.
- Preschool Promise alters access to programs and control every details.

#### Childcare Services

- Lack of slots and hours of care to meet the needs of families.
- Lack of accessible online applications.
- Limited public transit, especially in rural area.
- Lack of small center/co-op or other kinds of options for families.

#### Other concerns

- No Early Headstart in Lincoln County.
- Expected growth of population vs. available childcare services.
- Lack of coaching vs. continual growth of a program.

- ✓ Child care licensing sets a standard for the health and safety of children which is related to quality services.
- ✓ PSP and Head Start regulate and prioritize children with special needs.
- ✓ Awareness in government and business that childcare is a need worthy of discussion.
- ✓ The PSP requirements and the SPARK standards provide a benchmark for continuous growth and high expectations.

**Policies**

- ✓ EL Hub facilitate the alignment and great communication between partners, providers and other decision makers and help to let diverse voices being heard.
- ✓ Pollywog, CCR&R, EI/ECSE are functioning well to support children and their families in LBL.

**Connections**

- ✓ Hub Governing Board is inclusive of cross-sector leaders across the region.
- ✓ Strength at the community level.
- ✓ Multiple workgroups are working for child care needs in our region.

**Decision Making**

**State systems and State Policies**

- Lack of alignment between different agencies and programs, or between central background and individual providers.
- Some licensing procedures are time consuming and become burdens for providers.
- Required paperwork is beyond the capacity of many families to complete and become a barrier.
- Different regulations between K-12 and preschools hinder partnerships.
- Some State programs are not individual or small providers friendly.
- Inequity in the ability to meet regulations among small and district/center based PSP providers.
- Lack of incentive pay for services offered outside 7-6pm.
- Lack of consistent application of policies across state funded programs.

**County/city system and policies**

- City SDF limit ability to increase services.
- Local county and city policies vary around zoning and taxes for child care programs and are hard for providers to navigate.

- Prompt communication is still challenging.
- Too much paperwork and process for families to get into Head Start and PSP.
- Registration for PSP coordinated enrollment is still a confusing process for some families.
- Lack of alignment between systems in rural area and lack of resources for people to find information.

**Providers**

- Lack of family providers and small providers' voice.
- Timeline for planning and building programs to access funding is unrealistic.

**Communities and families**

- The systemic barriers for historically underserved communities.
- Ignore the impact of community policies.
- Lack of voice from prioritized families and communities (Latinx and /or Spanish-speaking, geographically isolated, families experiencing mental health challenges or children with disabilities).

**In system level**

- Lack of alignment between all levels of systems, agencies and partnerships when making decisions.

- ✓ Data driven decision making.
- ✓ EL Hub partners share common goals.
- ✓ Identifying priority populations helps to advocate for expanded child care, preschool and early learning services.
- ✓ Region shares common goal of providing quality services that meet the needs of all children and families found within our communities.
- ✓ K-12 Superintendents have prioritized early learning in our region.

- ✓ Cooperation and alignment between partners help to work to meet the needs of children and families.
- ✓ Inclusivity is a shared mindset in our region.
- ✓ Good and consistent communication about what the issues are.
- ✓ A shared belief in the importance of quality early childhood experiences and meeting the need of families in our region.
- ✓ A shared understanding that child care is a fundamental driver to a healthy economic system in our community.



## Goals



## Shared Mindsets



- Lack of sustainable models for recruitment and retention.
- Lack of inclusive practices included throughout early care and education.
- Goals are not aligned across all partners.
- Increasing Universal Preschool at the expense of infant-toddler care.
- How do we react when goals are not/cannot be accomplished?
- There is a build-in tension in all of this because we tend to focus on the things that are being measured or expressed rather than making actual changes occur.



- Problem is too big for local solution.
- All community members are not always heard (for example, ESL providers and families, families that are struggling with food, housing).
- Silo mentality and opposition to growth of services in some communities.
- Lack of understanding.
- Greed.
- Unfortunately, shared beliefs do not always pay the bills.



# Common Ecosystem Conditions and Advocacy for RUO Objective 2

Level 1 Themes

Level 2 Themes

Level 3 Themes



Note: Items of Priority are highlighted in yellow color

**RUO Objective 2**

- Lack of Financial Resources
- Cost of Care Mode

Advocate

Public Investment & Awareness

<p><b>Facilities/ Infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of Capital Investment Fund</li> <li>Lack of Licensable Spaces</li> <li><b>Zoning Issues</b></li> <li>Liability of Operation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Ongoing Operational Cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Salary Scale COLA</li> <li>Deferred Maintenance</li> <li>Benefits</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cross-Sector Messaging (Media)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Importance of Early Years</li> <li>Quality Child Care</li> <li>Parent as First Teacher</li> <li>Normalize Parenting Education</li> <li>Home Visiting Services</li> <li>Business Leader Education</li> </ul>	<p><b>Affordability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Access to Diverse Publicly Funded Programs</b></li> <li>Transportation Cost</li> <li>Lack of Incentives for Providers to Accept ERDC</li> </ul>

Advocate & Educate

- Language
- Age Group
- Provider Type
- Hours of Operation
- Location

Staffing

Classroom Support

**Education Pathways**

Compensation

Lack of Qualified Specialists or funding to hire

- **Equity of Access**
- **Affordability**
- **Career Pathways:**
  - Classroom Teacher
  - QMHA
  - EI/ ECSE
  - Behavioral Support Specialist
  - CCR&R
  - Administrators
  - Curriculum Specialist

Recruitment/ Living Wage

Advocate

Policies

- Incentives for FFNs to become Licensed
- Policies implemented without classroom support for staff – Exclusion/Expulsion policy
- Lack of alignment of education ( K-12, OPK, PSP, Childcare)
- Expansion of Business or Industry without Childcare Infrastructure for Employees
- PSP implemented without supports in place that mirror H.S. (Mental Health Nursing)**
- EI/ ECSE needs expanded qualifications for eligibility.

**Advocacy Work & Plans 2023-25**

- ✓ Business Summit
- ✓ Registered Family Expansion
- ✓ Developing Accessible ECE Program
- ✓ New Kindergarten Assessment –how to use as shared PD/ Transition Tool