

E Q U I P

EDUCATION & QUALITY INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIP

A public-private partnership to improve Child Care in Oregon

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NEW PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP LEVERAGES STIMULUS DOLLARS TO IMPROVE CHILD CARE IN OREGON

(Portland, OR; May 11, 2009) Today the Oregon Commission for Child Care, the Children's Institute, The Oregon Community Foundation, and the Oregon Child Care Division announce a major new initiative to improve the quality of early care and education in Oregon. The Education and Quality Investment Partnership (EQUIP) is being launched statewide to improve the lives of Oregon children by promoting professional development of early care and education workers and by increasing program quality.

Initial support for the initiative includes \$2.9 million in federal stimulus funds and a \$200,000 contribution from The Oregon Community Foundation.

"Quality child care begins with ensuring that those who care for our children are well trained and that facilities are safe and secure," Governor Ted Kulongoski said. "This initiative is a bold, innovative approach to addressing these issues by leveraging resources through a strong public-private partnership."

EQUIP is the result of an effort that began in 2008 when state agencies and private organizations came together to create a strategy to raise the quality of early care and education in Oregon. Research emphasizes the importance of creating and maintaining a skilled early childhood workforce as a key to quality early care and education.

"Investing in children requires investing in their teachers," said Swati Adarkar, executive director of the Children's Institute. "We must give greater recognition to and invest more resources in the adults who care for and educate our youngest children."

Because of early planning, when the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act made additional funds available for child care, Oregon was well positioned to make strategic use of the funds. "It's gratifying to see that kids are among Oregon's priorities for using economic recovery funds," said Senator Ron Wyden. "Reaching and teaching children early in life pays dividends far into the future, for our state and the nation. Initiatives like EQUIP are exactly what Congress intended states to do with federal economic recovery dollars."

EQUIP has two strategies:

- Create incentives for child care professionals to reach higher levels of education and training
 - Encourage centers and family child care homes to achieve a new state benchmark for quality
- In its first phase, EQUIP will provide education awards to individuals who document educational achievements on the Oregon Registry, the state's early care and education professional development

lattice. The awards will encourage workers to stay in the field and seek higher levels of professional training and education. The program will be administered by the Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education at Portland State University.

A fund to promote program-level improvements will be launched in a later phase.

“This is a strategic use of stimulus dollars. In the short term, it increases training and compensation for early care and education workers and allows more parents to work without worrying that their children are not being cared for adequately. In the long term, this investment will pay off in stronger outcomes for Oregon,” said Greg Chaillé, president of The Oregon Community Foundation.

“This innovative partnership is a boost to local communities and a down payment on Oregon’s future,” said Senator Jeff Merkley. “I’m glad to see economic recovery funds helping our youngest students by investing in their teachers. By supporting programs like EQUIP we’ll make sure an economic recession doesn’t also drag us into an educational recession.”

For more information, contact the Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (1-877-725-8535; 503-725-8535; www.centerline.pdx.edu)

About The Oregon Community Foundation

The mission of The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) is to improve life in Oregon and promote effective philanthropy. OCF works with individuals, families, businesses and organizations to create charitable funds to support the community causes they care about. Through these funds, OCF awards more than \$60 million annually in grants and scholarships.

About the Children’s Institute

The Children’s Institute is a research and action organization dedicated to improving the odds for Oregon’s at-risk children. The institute moves research to action by promoting cost-effective public and private investments in early childhood programs.

About Oregon Commission for Child Care

The mission of the Oregon Commission for Child Care is to advise the Governor and Legislature on the issues, problems, and solutions related to affordable, quality child care in Oregon; and to advocate for the availability of safe, quality and affordable child care. The commission was created within the Employment Department in 1985 and is comprised of 18 members, including three representatives from the Legislative Assembly who serve as nonvoting members. One member is appointed by the President of the Senate and two are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

About the Oregon Child Care Division

The Child Care Division in the Employment Department is Oregon’s lead agency for federal child care funds, including the stimulus funds. The division is also responsible for regulating child care in Oregon.

About the Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network

Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies help parents find quality child care and offer training to child care professionals that increases the quality of the care they provide.

About the Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education

The Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD) provides leadership in the development and operation of integrated and statewide professional development standards and systems. OCCD promotes professional development to achieve high-quality care and education for children and youth, and creates and supports training and education. The Center is housed at the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Portland State University, which serves as both a fiscal and administrative agent.