

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 18, 2019

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Preschool For All task force



TASK FORCE CONCLUDES PRESCHOOL FOR ALL NEEDED IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

Portland, Ore. -- A coalition of 30 leaders from the public, private, and social sectors are calling for a dramatic expansion in affordable, high quality preschool opportunities for children in Multnomah County. The report released today calls for using a more localized income criteria for free preschool, capping preschool costs for all families at no more than 7 percent of household income and increasing compensation and training for the early learning workforce.

A strong body of research shows the tremendous impact of high-quality early learning programs on a child's brain development, school readiness, and family well being. Economists estimate that the rate of return for funding high-quality preschool ranges between \$7 and \$10 for every dollar invested.

“Expanding preschool opportunities to everyone in our community - just as other cities like Seattle and San Francisco have done - is one of the best investments we can make,” said Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson, who convened the group. “This report provides us with a community-led roadmap for how to build a preschool system that we can be proud of.”

The Preschool for All Task Force met over nine months, developing a roadmap for overcoming the barriers to universal preschool in Multnomah County, starting with children who have the least access to quality, affordable opportunities.

Children in Multnomah County face significant disparities with children living in poverty, children of color, children with special needs, and children whose home language is not English having less access to high-quality preschool. Oregon is the fourth least affordable state when it comes to preschool. State and federal funding provide preschool for only those families in deepest poverty, reaching only 15 percent of three and four year olds in Multnomah County. Multnomah County also has one of the highest housing costs in Oregon, with 40 percent of households spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. These economic pressures often make quality early childhood education out of reach for many families, which means too many children missing out on the benefits it provides.

“We know that high school graduation rates and college and career success are built on the foundation of early childhood education,” said Kali Ladd, KairosPDX executive director and task force member. “Providing culturally specific preschool opportunities is a key to engaging children and their families and putting them on the right path.”

“No child's opportunities should be determined by the quality of preschool their family can afford,” said task force member Andrea Paluso, executive director of Family Forward Oregon. “We need to provide every child with a quality education, and every parent with the options that work best for their family — that means making a variety of high-quality preschool programs accessible and affordable for all.”

The report also called for:

- Developing a mixed delivery model of home-based, center-based, Head Start and public school-based preschool programs that include culturally specific and multi-generational early learning programs.
- Assisting with the building of new preschool facilities and improving existing ones.

The full report can be found [here](#).

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