

Preschool For All task force



Convened by Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson

All young children in our community deserve the chance to learn and grow in safe and joyful environments. Positive preschool experiences help children develop cognitive and social-emotional skills, and prepare them for kindergarten.

Many children – especially children living in poverty, children of color and children whose home language is not English – experience barriers when accessing early learning opportunities.

This is not surprising when considering that a single-parent family at the median income must spend 41.2 percent¹ of their take-home wage on child care or preschool. Oregon is the fourth least affordable state in the nation for the cost of preschool.² Oregon does provide funding for families deepest in poverty to access preschool, however, this funding only reaches 10 percent of the state's 3 and 4 year olds³ and 6 percent of 3 and 4 year olds in Multnomah County.⁴



A strong body of research shows the tremendous impact of quality early learning on brain development, school readiness, and long-term benefits to schools and communities. Economists estimate that for every dollar invested in preschool, the return comes back 7-10 times that amount.⁵ Sixty programs in 43 states across America,⁶ including in Denver, Seattle, and San Francisco, have made significant investments in their communities to reap the social and financial benefits.

Can our community be the next to invest in our young children and in the future of our county?

Task Force Purpose & Goal

In the Fall of 2018, County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson will convene a coalition of leaders across the public, private, and social sectors to determine the pathways to expand preschool in our community.

The **Preschool for All Task Force** will focus on the two years before kindergarten as a critical leverage point for learning and investment. The task force will consider strategies that serve all children, with a special focus on the children who currently lack access - children living in poverty, children of color and children whose home language is not English.

The goal of the task force is to create a set of recommendations to expand preschool in Multnomah County, including funding options, policy guidance, and infrastructure approaches.

Member Roles & Responsibilities

The **Preschool for All Task Force** will include leaders from health care, school districts, culturally specific organizations, local government, and early learning. The Task Force will be guided by the voices of parent leaders from the Early Learning Multnomah Parent Advisory Council. Subcommittees will provide in-depth analysis and recommendations to the Task Force on strategy areas.

Task Force members are asked to attend monthly meetings Fall 2018 through June 2019

A Path Forward

When children are prepared for a productive and engaged future, they contribute to our civic and economic well-being as valuable employees, thoughtful leaders, and community members. Preschool gives children the opportunity to build the cognitive, social and emotional skills needed for them to flourish as adults. The **Preschool for All Task Force's** recommendations will provide our community a path forward to a more equitable and prosperous future.

For More Information

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¹ *How unaffordable is childcare in Oregon? New report ranks costs*, (Oregonlive: December 2017), https://www.oregonlive.com/pacific-northwest-news/index.ssf/2017/12/childcare_is_really_unaffordab.html

² *Ibid.*

³ National Institute for Early Education Research, *The State of Preschool* (2017), P. 25

⁴ Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division and EcoNorthwest

⁵ James Heckman, *Schools, Skills, Synapses* (2008)

⁶ National Institute for Early Education Research, *The State of Preschool* (2017), P. 14