

Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) Extended Duration Playbook: Effective Practices and Lessons Learned

Prepared For:



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Introduction

During the 2018-19 school year, Oregon’s Early Learning Division piloted extended duration preschool in 15 Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) Head Start classrooms throughout the state. Extended duration classrooms typically operated 6 – 6.5 hours daily for a minimum of 1080 hours of service. The Center on Early Learning and Youth Development at Western Oregon University was tasked with evaluating this pilot program by collecting data in the following ways:

- Pre-K CLASS Observations
- Supplemental classroom data collection
- Staff Surveys
- Family Surveys
- One-on-one conversations
- Group meetings

The lessons learned from this evaluation are distilled in this OPK Extended Duration Playbook to help future grantees implement effective practices for children, their families, and the teaching teams in extended duration classrooms. The Playbook will provide recommendations for

effective practices and resources to support grantees. In addition to the lessons learned from the Extended Duration pilot, the OPK Playbook also includes the recommendations from the Early Education Essentials report.

The OPK Playbook is divided into three sections based on a planning and implementation calendar for extended duration classrooms. Each section includes examples of effective practices and resources to empower the teachers and administrators as they move through the phases of planning, preparing for, and implementing an extended duration model classroom.

Section 1. Planning and Preparation – March through May



Preparing for extended duration in OPK programs requires careful planning and preparation to ensure all program elements are in place and necessary new staff are hired. Consistency in the classroom is the ultimate goal. The comfort and safety of the children in OPK extended duration programs is paramount. Therefore, budgeting will need to include extended

day staffing, searching for qualified teachers, and the potential costs associated with upgrading facilities and purchasing materials. Having clear and realistic planning and preparation goals are vital to the success of the children, families, and staff in extended duration programs.

In the subsections below, we will discuss hiring/staffing, financing extended duration classrooms, and participation in Spark.

Subsection 1.1. Hiring/Staffing Extended Duration Classrooms: Options and Effective Practices

Finding qualified staff to work in the extended duration classrooms was a challenge for a few grantees during the extended duration pilot. Grantees should begin as soon as possible to recruit and hire a pool of diverse and qualified early learning professionals. Due to the nature of

the extended duration classroom's longer day, grantees will need to adapt their position descriptions to reflect the differences between part day and extended duration job duties.

One strategy for recruitment may be to fill the extended duration teaching team positions from within the agency. Having the updated position descriptions will help teachers and staff to understand the unique requirements of this position.

However, if current staff does not represent the cultures of the children and families in the program, consider doing a very intentional search. If recruitment has been difficult in the past, review current practices of how open positions are announced. It is essential to reach out to communities who are underrepresented in an agency, including announcing position openings on social media. The Policy Council and community and civic organizations are excellent sources to help recruit and find new qualified candidates.



The extended duration program is best viewed holistically where the teachers who are recruited and hired understand that learning happens throughout the day, in a variety of child-centered activities. Extended duration preschool should not be seen as two, back-to-back part-day sessions. The top priority of an extended duration program, in addition to ensuring the health and safety of the children in the class, is to nurture and develop the children's love of learning. In areas where it is difficult to recruit and hire early learning professionals, special consideration should be paid to the preservice training and on-going professional development



of staff. This subject will be addressed in more detail in Sections 2 and 3.

Teachers need sufficient time to complete their out-of-class jobs. During the evaluation of the Extended Duration Pilot, teachers consistently reported having insufficient out-of-class time to complete lesson plans, complete observation and assessment requirements, conduct home visits, and complete required cleaning. Therefore, at a



minimum, grantees should offer extended duration programs with four days of classes each week and one day when teachers and assistants can complete out of class work. Optimally, grantees should schedule daily time for staff to complete their out of class work.

Some teachers reported increased stress when they were offered “pull-out” time during the school day. The 2018-2019 OPK Extended Duration Pilot Evaluation Final Report indicated that some teachers reported not leaving the classroom because they did not want to leave the children with less qualified staff. A method to alleviate this stress and build better classroom cohesion is to have on-going, high-quality classroom professional development for all of the classroom staff.

During the Extended Duration Pilot, the teaching staff were surveyed three times and consistently responded that the lack of

classroom teaching staff was their greatest concern. Here is a sampling of their responses: ***“Need staff to help with breaks and other issues that arise that pull staff time out of the classroom”*** and ***“Balancing the work with only two adults to do it all. The extra work in placing out cots while the other teacher keeps 18 children safe without any support.”***

When the essential support of Ambitious Instruction is strong, leaders and staff hold strong practice commitments to crafting inquiry-based and developmentally appropriate early learning experiences that help children achieve comprehensive development and learning goals. Social-emotional learning is prioritized and understood as the foundation upon which all other learning goals can be achieved. Families are knowledgeable and able to speak in detail about the nature of their children’s classroom experiences and how teachers persist in helping their children develop and learn to their fullest potential.

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Below are four models of effective staffing patterns which some grantees used during the Extended Duration Pilot. They represent ways to reduce the stress on teachers by either having a third person in the classroom most of the day or allowing the teachers the opportunity for more out of class time.

Co-Teacher Model			
Teacher A	Teacher B	Assistant	Aide
	AM Break		AM Break
AM Break			
		AM Break	
	Lunch		
Lunch			Lunch
		Lunch	
	PM Break		
PM Break			
		PM Break	PM Break

Floater Model			
Teacher	Assistant	Floater	Aide
AM Break		Cover AM	
	AM Break		
			AM Break
Lunch		Cover Lunch	
	Lunch		
			Lunch
PM Break		Cover PM	
	PM Break		
			PM Break

Job Sharing Model				
Teacher AM	Teacher PM	Assistant AM	Assistant PM	Aide
AM Break	Cover AM	AM Break	Cover AM	AM Break
	Lunch PM		Lunch PM	Lunch
Lunch AM		Lunch AM		
Cover PM	PM Break	Cover PM	PM Break	PM Break

Family Advocate Model			
Teacher	Assistant	Family Advocate	Aide
AM Break		Cover AM	
	AM Break		
			AM Break
Lunch		Cover Lunch	
	Lunch		
			Lunch
PM Break		Cover PM	
	PM Break		
			PM Break

Key	
Out-of-class Time =	
Breakfast/Lunch =	
Staff Covering =	
In-Class Time =	



Additional considerations for extended duration classrooms.

- Programs with adequate staffing reported lower levels of stress and classroom management challenges. Additionally, classrooms with a consistent third staff member reported fewer challenges in covering staff breaks, rest time, and out-of-classroom time for teachers.
 - Multiple grantees experimented with a co-teacher model. Having two teachers in the classrooms allowed teachers to share teacher-specific duties and ensured that there were teacher-qualified staff with children throughout the day.
 - One grantee assigned Family Advocates to classrooms. Family Advocates spent time in the classrooms and were also able to complete the educational home visits to assigned families, relieving the teachers of some of their out of class time duties and ensuring there were consistent, qualified staff in the classroom throughout the day.
- Several grantees indicated that the use of a “floater position” was helpful in providing adequate coverage (see indented bullet point below) where needed while maintaining a level of flexibility to respond to classroom needs as they arose. Floaters allow staff absences to be filled by a regular person, allowing for more continuity for children and teaching teams. Some grantees used resources typically set aside to hire substitutes to finance the floater position.

- A “floater” would generally be defined as a consistent teacher-qualified staff person who works in several classrooms, based on peak times of need, coverage of breaks, lunch, rest times, or teacher’s out of classroom time. Grantees whose staffing patterns included this position indicated it to be an effective strategy in maintaining ratios and enabling teachers to attend to other responsibilities as scheduled.



- Data showed that having a lower adult/child ratio was not a significant predictor of higher CLASS scores. Other staffing factors, such as the consistency of the classroom staff, played a more significant role.

Key Effective Practices in Extended Duration Classrooms:

- Recruit and hire a pool of diverse and qualified early learning professionals
- Update/create position descriptions that accurately reflect the job duties
- Orient new staff to their positions through new staff orientations, preservice training, ongoing professional development, and reflective supervision practices
- Limit school days to four days per week
- Maintain a minimum of two teacher qualified staff in each classroom in addition to assistants
- Schedule daily out of class time for teachers

Resources:

[Transition to Full-Day Program](#)

[Recruit and Retain Responsive Staff](#)

[Supporting Teachers to Meet Staff Qualifications](#)

Subsection 1.2. Financing Extended Duration: Options and Strategies



Subsection 1.2 demonstrates the need to have adequate staffing in extended duration programs. Based on this need, the Early Learning Division will be funding extended duration at 165% of ½ day base funding. This subsection will include some examples of how some grantees funded their extended duration pilots. During the Extended

Duration Pilot, it was found that grantees spent most of their budget on increased staffing. Staffing costs included:

- Increasing staff pay
- Hiring more staff
- Creating new positions
- Hiring coaches for teaching staff

Grantees also noted some other costs that covered needs associated with offering duration services. Some notable examples are:

- One grantee installed an air conditioner because children would be in the classroom in the afternoon and also longer into the summer.
- Most grantees reported spending slightly more on materials for the classroom because children would use more materials.
- Some grantees needed to purchase materials for rest time, including mats/cots and quiet activity materials.



- Some grantees improved their facilities and playgrounds, including adding shade structures.
- Teaching staff indicated these training needs:

- Time management. Teachers provided this feedback regarding time management,

“How to complete all work and mandatory tasks, when you have children for 6.5 hours a day.”

“The staff are struggling with how to get all their tasks done in the time they have. They do not have the office time our half day classes have. How do they plan for classroom activities, home visits etc.?”

- Classroom management
- Networking with other extended duration teachers
- Literacy
- Parent involvement
- Ideas for afternoon curriculum activities
- Creating a full day schedule
- Supporting children’s need for rest/nap time
- Summer activities



Key Effective Practices in Extended Duration Classrooms:

- Spend the majority of your funds on hiring staff, improved compensation for teaching staff, and continued professional development
- Consider the financial needs of extended duration when providing for:
 - Extra release time to support teacher collaboration and planning
 - Training needs associated with curriculum fidelity and teacher-child interactions

Resources:

[Transforming the Financing of Early Childhood Education](#)

[Early Childhood Systems Financing](#)

[Finance Worksheet](#)

Section 2. Preservice/Staffing – June through September 2020



In Section 2, the importance of preservice training for staff who are either new to the agency or current staff who are new to extended duration programming will be discussed. The operation of the extended duration classrooms offers a variety of new challenges and opportunities to address during the preservice training specifically.

Scheduling an extended duration day's activities is both challenging and rewarding. During the pilot, programs experienced circumstances outside of their control which prevented them from having ideal classroom schedules. Examples include scheduling playground time and rest time. The experiences of the pilot programs led to the recommended effective practices described in Subsection 2.1.

When selecting a classroom site, serious thought should be given to the facilities and the classroom spaces available. The importance of this aspect cannot be understated. Considerations such as where the children's bathroom is located and if there are offices for the teaching teams apart from the classroom are some of the significant questions addressed in Subsection 2.2 before a site is selected for an extended duration classroom.

As stated in Section 1, an extended duration program should not be viewed as simply two, back-to-back part-day sessions, but rather as an opportunity to extend the learning opportunities for children while reducing the number of transitions. In Subsection 2.3, we will discuss teaching in the classroom and some training to help teachers respond to the increased demands and enjoy their time in the classroom.

Subsection 2.1. Class Schedules and Activities

Teachers know that classroom schedules are an important part of the child's day. During the Extended Duration Pilot, The Research Institute concluded in their Final Report that, "Many classrooms had limitations on how they used their time, including pre-determined meal service times and/or shared playground space." As grantees select sites, they will continue to encounter limitations in their ability to have full control over their scheduled activities due to factors outside of



their control. The scheduling limitations for pilot programs located within an elementary school included but were not limited to when they could schedule their mealtimes and playground times. For pilot programs in grantee-owned properties there were some limitations based on CACFP regulations and the need to incorporate rest time into the daily schedule. One of the best ways for extended duration staff to envision how to create a schedule was to give them the opportunity to visit or contact other, currently operating extended duration classrooms within the grantee or a neighboring community.

Key Effective Practices in Extended Duration Classrooms:

- Be intentional about efficient and engaging transitions and reducing the number of transitions and wait times during the day.
 - Classrooms with minimal and intentional transitions experienced fewer classroom management issues.
 - Some classrooms had over 20 transitions noted on their schedules.
- Consider the length of rest time. Make sure that children who do not need to rest have appropriate activities to enhance their learning and that the length of rest time isn't dictated by the need to give staff breaks, pull out time, or other non-instructional goals.
 - Add a rest time, varying in length from 20-120 minutes.
- Reduce the amount of time children spend in whole group activities. Plan curricular activities around free choice, small group times, gross motor/outdoor, and meal times.
- Intersperse quiet activities with more active activities. For example, sitting at lunch, then circle, and then tables can lead to long periods of sitting. While at the same time, music and movement followed by outdoor play, followed by yoga, is a long period of activity.

- Add in more gross motor time, an additional small group time, and/or another opportunity for free play.
- Provide breakfast, lunch, and a snack to children.
- Use all available staff to plan, participate, and set up for activities. Make sure each adult knows their role in each activity and transition.

Resources:

[Schedules and Routines](#)

[The Culture of Sleep and Child Care](#)

[Let's Talk About Routines](#)

[Transitions](#)

Subsection 2.2. Facilities and Materials



Facilities that are available for lease, purchase, or through other arrangements vary greatly in their ability to support an early learning environment. The Extended Duration Pilot sites were no exception. Those housed in public schools with elementary school children lacked bathrooms in the classrooms or separate office space for teachers. This created additional challenges for classroom staff.

Because of the increased classroom time in extended duration classrooms, pilot programs needed to invest in materials and furnishing to equip their classrooms. This included the following: rest mats/cots, “stuffies” for rest time, more books and quiet activities for children to use during rest time, project-based curriculum/activities for small group work in the afternoons, and a greater variety of gross motor equipment for both indoor or outdoor gross motor play.

Key Effective Practices in Extended Duration Classrooms:

- Select a site for extended duration classrooms with built-in bathrooms to reduce the amount of staffing needed to take children to out-of-classroom bathrooms.

- Provide teachers with an office space outside of the classroom to complete all of their out-of-class responsibilities.
- Provide children with access to indoor or covered playgrounds where children can play during extreme weather.
- Extended Duration classrooms need to have sufficient heating and/or cooling to provide for the comfort of the children.
- Provide a quiet space for children to rest and a separate space to play and learn for children who are not resting.



Resources:

[Building a Head Start Site](#)

[A Guide to Real Property](#)

[Financing and Budgeting for Early Care and Education Facilities](#)

Subsection 2.3. Teaching in Extended Duration Classrooms: Approaches to Maximize Children’s Growth and Development



The Research Institute’s Final Report found that teachers who participated in the Extended Duration Pilot experienced “consistently higher” CLASS scores during the morning observations when compared to the afternoon observations. Some activities which resulted in better interactions (and higher CLASS scores) were these: small group activities, meal times, and free choice.

Activities which reduced opportunities for

adult-child interactions contributed to the lower CLASS scores in the afternoon half of the extended duration classes. Because of this, preparing classroom staff for the rigors of an extended day is essential for them to be effective and successful in the classroom.

Much of what works in a part-day Head Start classroom can be integrated into an extended duration classroom. Helping teaching staff to consistently deliver high quality teaching strategies as demonstrated through the CLASS observation tool will help staff feel successful in the classroom, reduce stress, and improve outcomes for children.

Below is an example of a 6.5-hour daily schedule for an Extended Duration classroom:

Time			Pre-K
8:30	–	9:00	Welcome routines/hand washing/breakfast/bathroom
9:00	–	9:15	Circle time
9:15	–	10:30	Free choice/small group activities
10:30	–	11:30	Gross motor
11:30	–	12:00	Hand washing/lunch/bathroom
12:00	–	12:45	Rest time/quiet activities
12:45	–	2:15	Small groups/free choice/gross motor/hand washing/snack/bathroom
2:15	–	2:45	Hand washing/snack/bathroom
2:45	–	3:00	Story/music and movement/closing activity

Key Effective Practices in Extended Duration Classrooms:

- Have planned opportunities for children to exercise their autonomy.
- When appropriate, follow the children’s lead during the school day.
- Ask open-ended questions and give children time to respond.

Resources:

[Staff Zoning to Maximize Learning](#)

[Communication Between Teachers](#)

[Improving Teacher-Child Interactions: Using the CLASS in Head Start Preschool Programs](#)

Section 3. Staff Support – October 2020 through June 2021



When the children arrive and classes begin, the daily stresses of teaching begin to mount for even the most qualified and experienced teachers. Extended duration teaching staff will need support from the non-teaching staff and their supervisors to maintain high quality-teaching and a child-centered environment. Without the

effective practices outlined in the previous two sections and this section, the successful implementation of an extended duration classroom will likely be impacted.

Grantee leaders emphasized the importance of ongoing professional development for teachers in extended duration classrooms. Professional development throughout the school year for extended duration staff needs to be a high priority. Planning for in-service days or times will be an important step.

Subsection 3.1. Support for Teachers and Staff, Instructional Leadership, and Professional Development for Extended Duration: Supporting Early Educator Effectiveness

The pre-service trainings will help to build a strong foundation before the school year starts. This includes spending time in other extended day programs and/or receiving peer-to-peer support from other extended duration teachers. Additionally, after the beginning of the school year, efforts will be needed to continue the professional development of all the classroom staff. Classroom aides, assistants, and other support staff need to be included in all professional development trainings. In the face of budgetary and staffing constraints it may be tempting to omit assistants, aides, and other support staff from classroom professional development, leaving them to complete managerial tasks, and focus classroom professional development on the Lead/Head teachers. However, this approach to professional development ends up creating an imbalance of knowledge and skills in the classroom.

To alleviate this imbalance of knowledge, grantees should ensure all teaching staff receive high quality, on-going training. This on-going, high-quality classroom professional development does not mean that all classroom staff attend the same training. There are and will be different needs for different staff. Supervisors and program leadership need to work with each staff member to create a professional development plan that will support them in their position and encourage professional growth.



Key Effective Practices in Extended Duration Classrooms:

- Provide on-going mentoring and/or peer-to-peer extended duration opportunities, such as an Extended Duration Community of Practice Call or meeting.
- Provide on-going professional development and coaching focusing on the practices reflected in the Pre-K CLASS domain of Instructional Support.
 - Provide professional development in the domains of Instructional Support. Targeted professional development related to Concept Development, Quality of Feedback, and Language Modeling will enable teachers to support children's development in these areas.

When the essential support of Effective Instructional Leaders is strong, leadership positively affects teaching, children's learning, and engagement of families through a strong, purpose-driven vision for developmentally appropriate and ambitious early childhood education. By cultivating shared leadership and excellence in teaching and learning, leaders empower teachers and families to embrace the important roles they have in making the vision for the program a reality. Teachers and families trust in the leader's vision for their school/center and are inspired to improve teaching and learning.

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- Increasing the skills of teachers as they interact one-on-one with children and have deeper conversations will improve the Instructional Support CLASS scores.
- Provide on-going professional development, resources, and coaching related to the Regard for Student Perspectives in the Emotional Support domain.
 - Professional development focused on brief and engaging group learning activities will improve scores in those areas.
 - Professional development focused on taking/asking for the child’s lead and allowing for flexibility of movement will also lead to more positive child outcomes.

Resources:

[Staff Wellness and Effective Teaching Practices](#)

[Language Modeling and Conversations: Novel Words](#)

Subsection 3.2. Parent Engagement in Extended Duration Classrooms: Challenges and Opportunities

Overall, the families who received extended duration services were highly satisfied with the length of the day and the learning experiences that their children received. Here are a few comments from the parent survey:

“It is mostly in sync with K-12 schedule. However, I noticed that without having transportation offered for them it would make it really hard for parents to work if they don’t have other help. Most work hours are longer than school hours and getting kids to other care would be tricky.”

“Que él tiene más tiempo de aprender y a socializarse con los demás niños y no esta demasiado en el teléfono. Aprende mas. – He has more time to learn and socialize with other children and he doesn’t spend so much time on the cellphone. He learns more.”



“Full days are convenient. Works good with older siblings in school.”

“Able to work 20 hrs/wk at another school to help our family get off welfare this year!!! Thank you!”

The comments from parents indicated that the two greatest values of the extended duration pilot were: increased learning for their child and their ability to work or work longer hours. When considering how to increase parent engagement, grantees should be respectful of parents’ time and find strategies to increase communication beyond volunteering in the classroom. They should evaluate how regular communication and volunteering is happening within their program and be open to different methods. Below are some strategies grantees can employ beyond volunteering in the classroom:

- Brief daily updates with parent
- Planned weekly check-in
- Social media

Key Effective Practices in Extended Duration Classrooms:

- Provide transportation for extended day services, based on community need.
- Align the program hours with local elementary school hours to better help families with scheduling.
- Involve families in the planning of program activities.
- Welcome families into the classroom.
- Use additional forms of communication and methods of involvement to engage families.



When the essential support of Involved Families is strong, work in the school/center is undergirded by the belief that partnerships with families and being influenced by families’ knowledge and opinions are critical to their teaching effectiveness and children’s success. Families articulate these as core beliefs of the program and detail actions taken by leaders and staff that embodied that vision.

Resources:

[Family Engagement](#): a collaborative and strengths-based process

[Requirements for Program Transportation Services](#)

[Systematic Implementation of Full-Day Kindergarten in a Large Suburban School District: A Change Leadership Plan](#)

Closing Statements

The purpose of the Oregon Prekindergarten Playbook: Effective Practices and Lessons Learned is to support grantees in establishing extended duration programs. In establishing an extended duration program, we acknowledge that each grantee has different circumstances and different community compositions that affect the program planning. These recommendations represent effective practices that, when applied, have resulted in improved outcomes for the teachers and children.



Additional Resources

[Early Education Essentials](#)

Section 1. Planning and Preparation – March through May 2020

Subsection 1.1. Hiring/Staffing Extended Duration Classrooms: Options and Effective Practices

[Staff Recruitment and Retention](#)

[Active Supervision FAQs](#)

[Hiring Practices](#)

[Ensuring New Employees' Success: Best Practices for Employee Onboarding](#)

Section 2. Preservice/Staffing – June through September 2020

Subsection 2.1. Class Schedules and Activities

[Prohibited Caregiver/Teacher Behaviors](#)

Classroom Schedules

[Head Start Preschool Program Full-Day Schedule](#)

[Schedules and Routines](#)

[Example Class Schedule from Southern Illinois University](#)

[Daily Routines in Action](#)

Subsection 2.3. Teaching in Extended Duration Classrooms: Approaches to Maximize Children’s Growth and Development

[Promoting Adult-Child Interactions That Promote Higher-Order Thinking and Language Skills](#)

[MyPeers Orientation](#)

[Thick and Thin Conversations](#)

[Code Switching: Why It Matters and How to Respond](#)

[Focus on Phonological Awareness](#)

[Focus on Oral Language and Vocabulary](#)

[Focus on Instructional Supports: Resources to Help Head Start Programs](#)

Section 3: Staff Support – October 2020 through June 2021

Subsection 3.1. Support for Teachers and Staff, Instructional Leadership, and Professional Development for Extended Duration: Supporting Early Educator Effectiveness

[Planning Staff Meetings](#)

[Techniques for Improving Instructional Support](#)

[Finding Opportunities for Concept Development Within Your Curriculum](#)

[What Teachers Want You to Know: A Note to School Administrators](#)

[Preparing Principals to Support Early Childhood Teachers](#)

[Burnout Syndrome Among Educators in Pre-School Institutions](#)

[Riding the Turnover Wave](#)