

# Report on a Framework for Professional Development for Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care

December, 2011



- “[Professional Development] represents something precious and something we are all vested in and the thing we want to lift up and support. The hands represent our vision for the future and the collaborative nature of working in teams.”

- Fall Forum participant who selected this picture to represent what she hoped to accomplish.

The National Professional Development Center on Inclusion (NPDCI) brings together professionals from across agencies to ensure that early childhood teachers are prepared to educate and care for young children with disabilities in settings with their typically developing peers. In the fall of 2007, Oregon was selected as one of eight states to receive technical assistance from NPDCI, with the goal to develop, implement and evaluate a cross-sector plan to support increased opportunity for professional development regarding inclusion. The Teaching Research Institute (TRI) was awarded funding from the Oregon Department of Education to collaborate with NPDCI to coordinate a statewide effort. As a result the Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Collaborative (OECIC) was formed and the Professional Development (PD) Workgroup established. The PD Workgroup is composed of cross-sector early childhood PD providers representing the following services: early intervention/early childhood special education, Head Start, child care, private preschool, mental health, therapy (e.g. physical, occupational, and speech/language), and special health care needs

The PD Workgroup collaborated to develop the following definition of early childhood inclusion:

*Inclusion, as a value, supports the right of all children, regardless of abilities, to participate actively in natural settings within their communities. Natural settings are those in which the child would spend time had he or she not had a disability.* (Adopted from NAEYC/DEC position statement, March 2008; updated 2009).

Other work included a gaps analysis to determine specific needs around professional development in the state of Oregon and inclusion competencies that could be integrated into the present professional development system by cross-sector groups of early childhood professionals.

This work was guided by the following philosophy:

*The provision of quality early childhood education and care is firmly supported across sectors of providers in Oregon. In order to ensure quality in early childhood education, providers must have the tools to enrich and scaffold the learning experiences of children ages birth to eight.*

The following report was prepared by the PD Workgroup of the Oregon Early Childhood Inclusion Collaborative. The purpose of the report and the accompanying framework and goals is to distribute the important work of this cross-sector workgroup. We believe this work is consistent with the governor's initiative to build a cross-sector workforce in the early childhood system. We hope that this framework and the recommendations will be useful as the initiative moves forward.

### **Process**

In November of 2011, 35 representatives of multiple early childhood agencies came together at a Professional Development Fall Forum and approved a Cross-sector Framework for Professional Development. These agencies included Oregon Department of Education, Oregon Employment Department - Child Care Division, Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, Head Start, Oregon Child Care Resource and Referral Network, Oregon Child Care Coalition, Nursing, Mental Health, Oregon Center for Children and Youth with Special Needs (OCCYSN), Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education (OCCD) and higher education faculty from Portland State University, University of Oregon, Western Oregon University, Blue Mountain Community College, Southwestern Oregon Community College, Portland Community College, Forest Grove faculty in Physical and Occupational Therapy, and Mt. Hood Community College.

The group identified several assumptions within the framework:

- There is value in creating one system to document and recognize professional achievement of individuals working in the early childhood system. However, articulation for professionals who are required to be credentialed or licensed by other professional organizations is necessary in order to assure functionality.
- The Oregon Registry is unanimously recognized by this group as an effective, viable system that can be expanded to help achieve the goals of cross-sector professional development. Incorporating the existing Oregon Registry Trainer Program into one system has broad support but needs a thoughtful process to insure an effective system.
- Including all early childhood professional development providers in the Oregon Registry Trainer Program is a good way to provide consistency and connectedness across all sectors.
- Now is a critical time to standardize professional development. Examining current workforce standards by aligning and/or crosswalking them with state and national professional development standards will help assure quality learning experiences for all young children.

- A statewide policy mandating a cross-sector PD system for all agencies, accreditation bodies, and organizations may be needed to ensure implementation.
- Work on continuing and blending funding streams is important for this process.

The framework for the cross-sector professional development plan that follows is a culmination of 4 years of planning and meeting by this professional development group. These recommendations are offered for consideration as Oregon moves forward with plans to enhance and enrich early childhood professional development across multiple agencies.



*– “Professional Development is strengthened, is better when there are lots of ingredients...Everyone brings different ingredients and makes it more palatable.”*

*-Fall Forum participant*

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

Oregon's Early Childhood Inclusion Collaborative (OECIC) is a statewide endeavor bringing together lead agencies in the early childhood system to enhance and expand inclusive opportunities for Oregon's young children with and without disabilities. OECIC along with Fall Forum participants developed the following visions, outcomes, definitions, goals and approaches for cross-sector Professional Development.

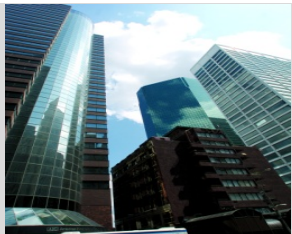
**Vision:** An integrated, cross-sector professional development system, across all early childhood sectors to ensure that early childhood practitioners are highly effective in supporting the development and learning of every young child, including those with diverse abilities.

**Outcome:** A set of recommendations, tools, materials and an action plan for developing a cross sector early childhood professional development system with identified leadership within the state and linked to other appropriate professional development initiatives.

### **Definitions**

- **Professional Development System:** As defined by NAEYC (2008), a PD system is a “comprehensive system of preparation and ongoing development and support for all early childhood education professionals working with and on behalf of young children”.

- **Cross-Sector:** As defined by NPDCI, cross-sector includes the major organizations (including parent organizations), agencies, and institutions in a state that provides services and support the development and learning of young children, their families, and the practitioners who serve them.
- **Early Childhood Care and Education Providers:** All professionals within the early childhood system working with and on behalf of young children.



- [Professional Development] *“In these different sized building there are a lot of floors – people come in to the professional development world from their own place. We do all live in our buildings but we are part of the same city. [We] need to come together as one”.*

*-Fall Forum participant*

## Goals

OECIC’s 2011-2012 Cross-Sector Professional Development Plan includes the following goals to modify, expand and/or revise existing strategies, programs and systems to form an integrated cross-sector, early childhood professional development system to:

- Goal 1:** Document and recognize professional achievement of individual early childhood professionals.
- Goal 2:** Recognize and standardize professional development for all sectors of early childhood.
- Goal 3:** Standardize certification and support for early childhood professional development providers.

**Goal 1: Document and recognize professional achievement of individual early childhood professionals.**

**Existing approaches currently used to document and recognize professional achievement of individuals:**

The Oregon Registry (administered by Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education )

The Oregon Registry Credential Program (administered by OCCD)

Oregon Department of Education EI/ECSE Specialist Authorization; ODE Supervisor Authorization

Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission Licensure

Credentialing and licensure: Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Mental Health, Nutrition, Nursing and Healthcare

University degrees, Certificates, National Association for Family Child Care Accreditation, Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation, Child Development Associate Credential (CDA)

**How can we build on what exists to create a comprehensive system to document and recognize professional achievement of individuals?**

- Base Oregon’s Early Childhood Professional Development System on a common set of child development standards (Child development standards already developed include: Oregon’s Early Learning Guidelines; Oregon Early Childhood Foundations and Born to Learn for Children Ages Birth to Five; and Head Start Child Development Early Learning Framework. )
- Create a clear articulation path from TSPC licensure to the Oregon Registry.
- Create clear reciprocal articulation between ODE Supervisor and Specialist Authorization and The Oregon Registry.
- Develop a self-evaluative professional development tool for individuals to use to assess where they are and what further PD is needed. The tool would be based on a level of competency.

**Parking Lot:**

Challenges/concerns/unresolved questions:

There are concerns that duplications exist and that particular attention needs to be paid to not create “multiple hoops to jump through”.  
Need to define the different sectors – education, medical, social services.  
Where are there overlaps and gaps?  
Need to learn about different roles of the professionals that serve children. How do we consult and collaborate?  
How do workplace standards, personnel standards, and child outcome standards work together?

Considerations for future development:

World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning could serve as a resource when considering how professionals providing

➤ Consider the development of an Early Childhood Consultation Credential designed to complement the content expertise.

therapy and medical services fit in the Professional Development System.

An Early Childhood Credential or credentialing system could benefit in licensure renewal for professionals that are licensed by professional organizations such as occupational therapists and physical therapists.

**Goal 2: Recognize and standardize professional development for all sectors of early childhood.**

**Existing approaches currently used to recognize and standardize professional development:**

The Oregon Registry Trainer Program – standards for trainers, sponsoring organizations and training sessions. This is built on the Core Body of Knowledge standards that guide professional development for the workforce.

EI/ECSC Authorization Core Competencies

OECIC Inclusion Competencies

Accreditation body for the academic institutions (e.g. College and University degrees, OT/PT, Nursing certificates)

**How can we build on what exists to create a comprehensive system to recognize and standardize professional development?**

- Crosswalk current professional development standards to determine consistency between all existing standards and to inform the development of one set of standards (Core Body of Knowledge, NCATE, NAEYC ECADA, OR TSPC).
- Use NAEYC national standards and key elements to refine the current professional development standards that are used for the Oregon Registry Trainer Program, Colleges and Universities.
- Expand and enhance Oregon Registry Trainer program to align with and accommodate other professional development providers, including cross-sector professional development providers.
- Secure incentives for professional development providers to encourage participation in the professional development system.
- Create professional development maps to assist early childhood professionals with the options for navigating professional development.
- Increase the number of specialty trainers.

**Parking Lot**

Challenges/concerns/unresolved questions:

Encourage those providing inservice training to participate in trainer approval system that includes adult development (learning?). Interim step: any official “approval” OK but official approval required!  
Encourage agencies who offer professional development to become sponsoring organizations in the Oregon Registry Trainer Program.  
Hiring qualified people = knowledge/degree + experience  
Need voice of parents to attest to implementation of practice  
Funding! Incentives, Quality support  
Cross sector – How to get buy in from other organizations (i.e., Head Start)

**Goal 3: Standardize certification and support for early childhood professional development providers.**

**Existing approaches to support professional development providers:**

The Oregon Registry Trainer Program, College & Universities

Teaching Research Assistance to Child Care Providers coaches, mentors

Local Child Care Resources & Referrals

Head Start

**How can we build on what exists to create a comprehensive system to support professional development providers?**

- Increase number of specialty master trainers and sponsoring organizations on the Oregon Registry Trainer Program.
- Identify technical assistance needs for increasing technology to support professional development (e.g., e-groups).
- Develop a searchable database of trainers by topic added to the Oregon registry Trainer Program and CCR&R's.
- Develop a training clearinghouse that blends training from all disciplines
- Provide mentoring at the local level for cross-sector professional development training. Mentors at the state level would assist with PD cross-sector systems ("Ambassadors at the state").
- Complete a needs assessment of training cross-sector professional development by region or county.
- Develop non-curriculum specific train-the-trainer (e.g., adult learning and professional development practices) and offer regularly or at a variety of times.

**Parking Lot:**

Challenges/concerns/unresolved questions:

Support for the sponsoring organizations – how to help specialty trainers become trainers without jumping through all of those hoops.

Training a technical assistance person by region to go in the field to provide support for trainers. So they wouldn't have to drive just to Portland or Salem.

How to support mono lingual trainers who do not speak English.

Translating materials, etc.

**FUNDING!**

Non-standardized training

Core skills/competencies

ECSE – how to support ECSE providers in increasing numbers in natural environments

Also how to coach, support, and mentor child care providers in relation to young children in EI/ECSE and inclusion in general.

*This document was prepared by faculty at the Teaching Research Institute with the help of Bill Lynch, Shelley deFosset and Pamela Deardoff.*