



# Community Engagement

## Early Literacy in the Community and at Home

### Oregon's Kitchen Table

May 2024



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

---

In 2023, the Governor Tina Kotek and the Oregon Legislature launched the Early Literacy Success Initiative to build momentum and capacity around early literacy development and to provide funding to strengthen literacy instruction across Oregon.

One of the four components of the Early Success Initiative—the Early Literacy Success Community Grants—focuses on supporting the efforts of families and communities as they help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. As part of its work to develop the new community grants program, ODE began work to create a framework and toolkit for community-based organizations, groups, and entities.

ODE partnered with Oregon Kitchen Table (OKT) to hear from community groups and families of young children throughout Oregon about what guidance, tools, and resources would be helpful for growing and developing early literacy supports.

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the engagement process as well as high-level findings. The attached report contains seven sections in addition to this Executive Summary:

- A description of the project’s outreach and engagement activities;
- General observations from across the entire community engagement process;
- Shared values and divergent views;
- Important activities for communities and families and barriers to providing and accessing them;
- Framework content;
- Recommendations about future engagement efforts;
- A brief conclusion; and
- Appendices, including annotated survey results, OKT’s Kitchen Table Conversation Guide, and slides used during Zoom Conversations.

## **ABOUT OREGON'S KITCHEN TABLE**

Oregon's Kitchen Table has two primary goals: 1) To provide all Oregonians an opportunity to participate in the decisions that affect them, with a particular focus on those community members who have been left out of or faced barriers to participating in traditional decision-making processes; and 2) To expand the range of voices that public decision-makers hear from and to provide a more complete picture of community values, needs, and desires.

OKT is the creation of the Hatfield School of Government, Kitchen Table Democracy, and a group of non-partisan, non-profit community organizations dedicated to helping Oregonians share their ideas, opinions, beliefs, and resources to improve Oregon and its communities. OKT offers both online and in-person engagement opportunities and promotes in-depth community engagement with the trade-offs and challenges decision-makers confront in governing our state.

Using culturally specific and targeted outreach, as well as community partnerships, we work with organizers, translators, and interpreters to assure that materials and online and in-person engagement activities are available for all Oregonians. We honor and value the wide range of values, ideas, and lived experiences that community members share with us and with public decision-makers.

The National Policy Consensus Center (NPCC) and NPCC's Oregon's Kitchen Table are housed within the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University.

## **OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

The purpose of this Oregon's Kitchen Table project was multi-fold: 1. to hear from families with young children throughout Oregon about what would help them at home and in the community as they support their children in developing early literacy skills; 2. to hear from a variety of community groups, organizations, and institutions about what they would like to have in the Framework and Toolkit as they grow and create early literacy supports for families; and 3. to hear from Oregonians who have not been part of state-level discussions on early literacy in the past. In order to meet these goals and reach those various communities, we created a number of ways for residents of Oregon

to provide input in multiple languages. The engagement period ran from early February 2024 through mid-April 2024.

We worked with community organizers and partners to support families in giving input through paper surveys, online surveys, and in community discussions. We offered the survey in nine languages: Arabic, Chinese, Chuukese, English, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese. Community organizers hosted gatherings and conducted community conversations with families in Chuukese, English, Russian, Spanish, Marshallese, and Nepali. We also worked with several statewide networks to host Zoom conversations with community groups, organizations, and institutions that offer early literacy programming to families outside of the school day. OKT also offered a Kitchen Table Conversation Guide in English and Spanish for any community group wishing to hold its own conversation.

OKT and multiple partners conducted outreach, primarily through online channels such as social media, email lists, and group messaging platforms. Community organizers also connected with people through phone calls, text messages, and in-person outreach.

Nearly 800 people from across Oregon participated in the various engagement activities. People participated in eleven languages. Over 70% of participants were from groups that experience disparities in educational outcomes. Nearly half of participants prefer to receive information in a language other than English.

The results of this engagement provide a sense of the values and beliefs held by those who participated at this particular time.

## FINDINGS

The following commonly held perspectives emerged across various community conversations, interviews, and responses to survey questions:

- Many people are eager to play some role in promoting early literacy, increased understanding of early literacy skills, and access to early literacy programming across the state.
- There is widespread recognition that families and community groups play important roles in supporting children in developing early literacy skills. In

addition, there is broad support to honor, celebrate, and promote the many ways that families and communities already do and can provide that support.

- Early literacy skills development does not happen in isolation but rather developing these skills takes place in many contexts and is embedded in almost every aspect of people's lives. This can feel overwhelming in terms of thinking about all the factors that play a role in how children develop these skills; however, it also means there is a wide universe for who can play a role in early literacy and how people can play a role.
- Joyful, welcoming environments that center families and children are critical to building relationships, strengthening connections, and engaging the whole family and wider community in promoting early literacy awareness and supporting children in developing skills.
- There is a strong desire to offer more activities of different types, from simple activities that anyone can do without training to more intensive academic support like tutoring. At the same time, there are significant concerns about how community groups might be able to meet the demand for skilled tutoring, especially in the short term.
- Growing new or strengthening current partnerships – particularly with schools – was top of mind for many community groups. We frequently heard a desire to see a shift in what these partnerships look like, especially in terms of how they could incorporate a sense of welcome and belonging for community groups and families in the school setting.

There were also some key areas that people hold different beliefs about or articulated conflicting viewpoints:

- People have differing perspectives about how they would like to see technology and computer-based applications used in supporting early literacy skills development. For some people, online or computer programs and applications are important tools they already rely on. Other people are interested in having more access and more guidance in how to use technology to support their children's learning. Still others view materials like books, paper, writing implements, and other hands-on materials as a priority in learning.

- People also disagree about how they want to see ODE incorporate “the science of reading” in the framework. Many people value approaches to supporting early literacy skills development that are grounded in science and are evidence-based; however, several people voiced concerns that using language heavily rooted in research and science could be alienating for people – including both staff and volunteers in community groups as well as families. Other people cautioned that they worry the “science of reading” is too heavily focused on phonics and might not allow enough room or attention to other aspects of literacy acquisition, particularly approaches that might be more appealing or fun for children.

## **FUTURE ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS**

This engagement process provided ODE with information about what people think would be most helpful to support families and children developing early literacy skills at home and in the community. The responses from this effort also provide ODE with particular areas to more deeply explore with community groups and families as ODE continues to develop the new Community Grants program. In addition, the input from participants raise some ideas about *how* ODE might engage people on early literacy. Recommendations for future engagement efforts include:

- Approach the Framework and Toolkit as “living” for ongoing review and adaptation and conduct targeted
- Focus further engagement with particular communities – particularly those with multilingual and bilingual learners - alongside future iterations of the Framework and Toolkit
- Identify or convene opportunities for shared learning and celebration of the work that people are already doing – in joyful and fun environments
- Deeper engagement on areas we observed interest and questions from participants, particularly around the links and opportunities for better alignment and partnerships between schools, families, and community groups

People are eager to continue to be part of building capacity and momentum around early literacy efforts in many different ways. The Framework and Toolkit could provide

an important starting point for joint work: a shared, common language that Oregonians— no matter who they are or how much they know about early literacy – can use around how we help young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

## **SECTION 1: Project Goals and Design**

---

### **BACKGROUND**

In 2023, Governor Kotek launched an effort to focus time, attention, and resources on early literacy. During the 2023 legislative session, the legislature then passed the Early Literacy Success Initiative. The Initiative has four goals:

- Increase early literacy for children from birth to third grade;
- Reduce literacy academic disparities for student groups that have historically experienced academic disparities;
- Increase support to parents and guardians to enable them to be partners in the development of their children’s literacy skills and knowledge; and
- Increase access to early literacy learning through support that is research-aligned, culturally responsive, student-centered and family-centered.

The bill also established four programs: the Early Literacy Success School District Grants, the Early Literacy Success Community Grants, Early Literacy Success Tribal Grants, and the Birth through Five Literacy Plan (administered through the Department of Early Learning and Care).

The Early Literacy Success Community Grants program focuses on three specific community-based goals:

1. Expand culturally and linguistically responsive early literacy programs for children in early elementary grades by:
  - a. Encouraging family and caregiver engagement; and
  - b. Providing research-aligned professional training and coaching for direct service staff in early literacy.

2. Develop and implement statewide, equitable programs that engage K-3? parents and children in early literacy.
3. Provide high-dosage tutoring programs<sup>1</sup> and training to tutors to qualify the tutors for instruction in a manner consistent with research-aligned literacy strategies.

As part of this effort, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) will develop an Early Literacy Community Toolkit (Toolkit) that includes an Early Literacy Community Framework (Framework), guidance, and additional support resources. The Toolkit will act as a core resource for qualifying organizations (community groups) across Oregon to effectively engage families in early literacy development outside of the regular school day. ODE sought to hear from communities about what resources and supports would be most helpful for communities in the Framework and Toolkit.

In December 2023, the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) partnered with Oregon’s Kitchen Table (OKT) on a statewide community engagement effort to better understand what would be most helpful for community groups and families who support young children in develop early literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). OKT launched community engagement activities in early February 2024 and completed activities in mid-April 2024.

The following report draws upon the input that families and community groups gave at this moment in time through several different ways, including interviews, different types of community conversations, and online and paper surveys.

## **ENGAGEMENT GOALS**

The purpose of Oregon’s Kitchen Table project was multifold: 1. to hear from families with young children throughout Oregon about what would be most helpful to them at home and in the community as they support their children in developing early literacy skills; 2. to hear from a variety of community groups, organizations, and institutions about what they would like to have in the Framework and Toolkit as they

---

<sup>1</sup> As of the writing of this report (May 30, 2024), the draft rules to define “High Dosage Tutoring” for the Early Literacy Success Community Grants in Early Literacy Grants were still in process. Because the rulemaking was in process during the engagement activities, OKT did not specifically use the term “high dosage tutoring” or define what that was but instead referred to “tutoring” in general.



grow and create early literacy supports for families; and 3. to hear from Oregonians who have not been part of state-level discussions on early literacy in the past. To meet these goals and reach those various communities, we created several ways for both community groups, as well as families with young children to provide input in multiple languages in spring 2024.

## **DESIGN AND OUTREACH**

In order to reach people throughout Oregon, Oregon’s Kitchen Table and ODE developed a multi-faceted set of engagement activities. At the start of planning for engagement, OKT conducted approximately 17 individual interviews with community connectors. Community connectors are people who are widely respected and trusted within their communities as well as outside their communities. They have relationships both within their own communities as well as externally and have a good grasp on where policies intersect (or don’t) with people’s on-the-ground experiences in their communities. While they have their own perspectives on issues, they are aware of and understand other perspectives that other people in their community might hold.

These interviews were intended to help inform the design of the outreach and engagement plan. They helped to identify potential co-hosts for Zoom conversations, as well as community organizers and other outreach channels. Community connector interviews also helped the OKT and ODE team in framing the content for engagement.

We also worked with community organizers and partners to support community members in giving input through interviews, paper surveys, online surveys, community discussions, and Zoom conversations with community groups. We offered the online survey in nine languages: Arabic, Chinese, Chuukese, English, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Ukrainian and Vietnamese. Two community conversations with families were also conducted in Marshallese and Nepali.

OKT and multiple partners conducted outreach, primarily through online channels such as social media, emails, and group messaging platforms. Community organizers also connected with people through phone calls, text messages, and in-person outreach. OKT presented to several of ODE’s Student Success Advisory Groups to share

opportunities for engagement and to answer questions and hear suggestions about engagement with and outreach to their communities.

Because people’s experiences with and knowledge about early literacy differs greatly depending on a number of factors, we primarily focused on asking people about reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. We heard from many people that “early literacy” either was not a familiar term or that it was one people don’t associate with activities they do either with their own children or in their work in the community. More people were able to engage in the conversation when we used terms like reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Our intention was not to ignore other aspects of early literacy skills development; instead, we aimed to use plain language that would be most understandable for people. Throughout our outreach and engagement activities, we used the term “community group” to refer to entities who provide or might provide some type of programs, resources, or supports connected to early literacy and related skills. This is intended to cover the different types of entities doing this work, from non-profit organizations and local governments to libraries and affiliated networks of groups.

We held ten Zoom conversations in March and April 2024 to provide opportunities for community groups to discuss what would be helpful for them in developing or growing early literacy programs, activities, and supports. These conversations were more focused on organizational level needs, challenges, and ideas. ODE also wanted to ensure that the Framework and Toolkit will support culturally and linguistically responsive programming and center families and students. In order to hear directly from families from a variety of cultures and whose children are multi-lingual learners, we worked with community organizers to encourage and support families in their communities to share their experiences and ideas. Through community conversations, online and paper surveys, and other activities.

## **CONTENT FOR ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES**

Because this engagement was intended for the general public, it assumes that respondents bring different levels of knowledge and familiarity regarding early literacy and related skills development. It was our goal to ensure that everyone with an interest

in how children learn to read, write, speak and listen can respond and share their experiences, ideas, and beliefs.

In all forms of engagement, people were given some background information about the Early Literacy Success Initiative and the Early Literacy Community Grants program. We developed questions and prompts for the survey as well as community conversations that fell under five general areas of inquiry:

- How people currently are engaging in activities around helping children in their families and / or communities develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills;
- What people would like to see more of to help support children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in the home and / or in the community;
- What are some of the barriers or challenges that people face in being able to access or provide the programming and activities they'd like to see;
- What people would like to learn more about regarding different early literacy skills; and
- What hopes people have for their children or children in their community as they develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

We also asked people who work for or volunteer with community groups about the topics they want to see included in the framework for the Early Literacy Success Community Grants program. Through the survey, participants were asked where they lived in Oregon as well as their age, their race, ethnicity or Tribal affiliation, and their preferred language. We also asked people to let us know if they or their children identified with particular communities who experience educational disparities.

The content for engagement activities is available in *Appendix A. Annotated Survey*, *Appendix B. Kitchen Table Conversation Guide*, and *Appendix C. Zoom Conversations for Community Groups*.

## **PARTICIPATION**

760 people participated across different forms of input and from 28 counties. Approximately 283 people took part in a community conversation for families. 85

people provided input via a Zoom conversation for community groups or in an interview. 391 people shared via an online or paper survey. Of the survey participants:

- 36% have a child who is between 5 and 10 years old in their family while 20% have a child between a baby and 5 years old in their family.
- 62% of participants were between 30 and 49 years old; 15% between 50 and 59 years old; and 11% between 17 and 29 years old.
- Over 70% of participants in the survey either are themselves or have children who are members of one of the following communities:
  - Tribal member or citizen
  - LGBTQ2SIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2 Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, plus other non-heterosexual orientations or genders)
  - English learner
  - Experience a disability
  - Have been or am without a house
  - Immigrant or refugee
  - Migrant worker or student
  - Child in foster care

People who participated in one of the 10 Zoom conversations were from approximately 60 community groups, entities, or organizations. Statewide groups or networks who were able to bring together multiple organizations from a variety of geographic areas helped to host four of these conversations, including conducting outreach and issuing invitations to community groups in their networks. These groups included:

- Culturally specific serving organizations, including those supporting Black families, Native and Indigenous families, Latinx families, families who are newcomers to Oregon, migrant workers and their children
- Public libraries
- After-school and summer programs
- Faith-based organizations
- Groups providing early literacy specific academic services outside of school hours

- Groups providing support and services to families with children who experience a disability, in particular children who have a reading-based learning disability
- Participants also identified as providing programs or services to children whose caregivers are incarcerated, children in foster care, families who experience homelessness, and families who live with lower incomes
- Local government entity
- Organization funding community-based efforts to support early literacy

Approximately 283 people participated in 13 community conversations organized by community organizers. These included nine gatherings held in Spanish, one in Chuukese, one in Marshallese, one in Nepali, and one in Russian. Participants in these conversations included people who identified as immigrants, refugees, migrant workers, and English learners. We also partnered with two food banks to gather input in English and Spanish from people living with lower incomes.

Before formal engagement began, OKT staff talked to people representing approximately 17 community groups to learn how and where early literacy is being talked about in different settings and communities. These conversations also inform this report.

## **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to summarize shared values and divergent values related to early literacy in the community and at home, discuss common themes, and highlight areas where there may be differing viewpoints and desires. This report is not intended to be a comprehensive list of every detail of every comment shared; however, all responses to open-ended comments were shared with ODE.

We also include a selection of quotes or comments we heard in different engagement settings. Quotes and comments included in the report either illustrate a particular point in someone's own words or echo what other people shared. Comments submitted through surveys are not altered or edited by Oregon's Kitchen Table except

for length. They are presented as written by participants, in their own words. For quotes or comments in languages other than English, we have provided a rough translation.

The following is a summary of the input that came through multiple pathways to Oregon’s Kitchen Table, including the survey, individual interviews, and community conversations. This input has been synthesized, so where there are quantitative survey results, we have included the percentages of how many participants selected a particular option. We have woven in analysis of in-person input throughout.

## **SECTION 2: General Observations**

---

Over the course of the different community engagement activities, we noticed some cross-cutting patterns in the input people gave. Some of those came through in the language that people used to describe their perceptions and experiences. Several of these are explored in more detail in the other sections, but since they cut across different communities and topics, we want to note these patterns. These include:

- In conversations with community groups, many people shared feelings of excitement and enthusiasm for Oregon’s increased focus on early literacy and interest in supporting the work of community groups. One person said, “We finally feel welcome after years of feeling like our group is stuck in a corner.”
- Several people shared that they joined the Zoom conversations because they are seeking a space where they could contribute and help move forward efforts to improve early literacy in Oregon. People with community groups said they weren’t aware of the new Early Literacy Community Grants program grants or even if they were, they aren’t planning on applying. They shared that they joined the conversation to see how they could help in some way and what they could learn from other community groups.
- There is widespread recognition that families and community groups play important roles in supporting children in developing early literacy skills. In addition, we heard many people voice a desire to honor and promote the many ways that families and communities already do and can provide that support.

Many families and community groups identified activities that occur as part of a family’s daily routine and don’t necessarily involve materials, books, or a technical level of knowledge about the components of early literacy. At the same time, we heard from many families that they want both more information, as well as encouragement to understand how they can support their children in their learning.

## **SECTION 3: Shared Values and Differing Views**

---

There were several areas where participants shared common values, similar concerns, and many of the same hopes related to early literacy and children in Oregon.

### **NURTURING JOY AND FUN TO SUPPORT EARLY LITERACY**

Across different forms of engagement and groups, people often used the words “joy” and “fun” in different contexts. Families as well as community groups expressed hopes that children will find joy in developing early literacy skills. In particular, people talked about wanting to see children find joy in reading. Several people noted the importance of caring adults bringing a sense of “excitement” and “fun” to their time with children. “It’s infectious,” one person said. “Then the children will be excited about books and reading.”

Among the kinds of materials, programs, or activities people want to see in their communities, several people specified wanting to see fun materials, programs, or activities. One person working in an afterschool program noted that fun was crucial, since children come to them after a full day of instruction and school.

Some of the most common responses to the kinds of activities that families are already doing with their children have elements of joy, play, and fun in them: games, dancing, singing, art, participating in cultural festivals or holidays, and theater. Adult family members talked about these activities as bringing joy to both them and the children in their family. Respondents to the survey were most interested in seeing more activities in their community “like cooking, singing, music, arts, and crafts” (18%).

Some people who are part of a community group shared concerns about too much focus shifting to phonics when talking about and providing instruction around early literacy. While some of this concern stemmed from wanting to ensure that other elements of early literacy were included, other people expressed a fear that elements of joy and fun would be left out or eliminated in favor of phonics instruction.

## **IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTION**

For participants who are part of community groups, we heard that building trust and a relationship with the children they support has to happen before more academic support like tutoring or homework assistance. A few people noted that this aspect of their work can take a considerable amount of time. For people who identified as being part of a culturally specific organizations, culturally relevant settings and approaches are key to that sense of connection. One person working with Native and Indigenous youth shared, “As we do our assessments, we do individual conversations and make time to get comfortable. We do assessments and tutoring work in a culturally affirming context. We have the time and space to build trust and comfort. We’ve seen that be successful and kids are very willing to participate in those assessments.”

“I hope children are able to connect and feel the ways that the skills they are learning in literacy empower them as individuals and members of their communities!”

Several people also mentioned the importance of consistency in relationships between children and the adults who are providing tutoring or other kinds of support in order to develop a sense of connection. Families talked about creating time and space to connect with their child through supportive activities like shared diary or journal writing or asking their child to recount the day’s events with them.

## **IMPORTANCE OF CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE APPROACHES**

Several people working for culturally specific organizations also talked about the importance of connecting early literacy activities to larger cultural gatherings or events to support children. One person noted that such gatherings could create an atmosphere of joy and celebration along with affirming children’s cultural identities. Several



Chinese and Russian speaking families shared that actively planning and participating in cultural festivals or activities with their children are important ways they support their children in developing reading, writing, and speaking skills.

Finally, people from community groups identified a need for connection across programs, spaces, and ages related to early literacy skills support. One person said, “we need to create an ecosystem that supports families from birth into school.”

We also heard that people – both families and community groups - want to have access to materials and activities that reflect children’s cultures, identities, languages, and other aspects of their lives. One person said, “whatever we do or use needs to feel relevant to children.” People shared that making explicit how materials and activities connect to children and families’ everyday lives was a key component in successful early literacy activities.

“If you want families and youth to be truly engaged and impacted in how they think about literacy, it must come from a place of relevant connection.”

“From administration to direct service, I want programs and systems to recognize the deep value of incorporating the cultural values and ways of knowing of the rich and vibrant communities of Oregon. Without including members of these cultural communities within the ranks of your programs, you will have limited opportunities to effect change.”

## MEETING A VARIETY OF NEEDS

Several people who provide tutoring or academic support shared stories of working with students whose families are facing significant challenges in meeting basic needs like food, shelter, and sleep. Some people want to see the Framework address where resources are available to support these students *before or concurrently with* literacy support. They don’t necessarily see themselves or their groups as being in a position to provide those resources; however, they want to be able to provide information and connect families to resources as one way to help lay foundations for children to be ready to learn. In one Zoom conversation, people working in libraries said they are frequently asked to fill gaps of many kinds. People noted that while libraries

have early literacy resources and libraries do want to bridge gaps for people, they aren't able to provide all the needed resources. Along with people's homes (19%), libraries came up the most (18%) as places in the community where people go to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

One of the most commonly mentioned needs we heard was transportation to and from places where people can find early literacy resources and materials. We heard this from both families and community groups; we also heard this from people who live in more densely populated areas as well as less densely populated areas.

Some participants also shared that understanding and navigating children's mental health was a major component of providing early literacy support for them and their organizations. People talked about mental health in multiple ways:

- How a child's perception of themselves in relation to their literacy skills development impacts their mental health (self-confidence, self-worth, recognition of abilities)
- How other factors that impact mental health - such as family circumstances or external situations - can then influence a child's ability to focus, learn, or fully participate in activities to develop early literacy skills.

## SHARED LEARNING

Several people from community groups said they view themselves in a relationship of shared learning with the children and families they support, that children teach the adults while the adults teach the children. One person who works for a non-profit providing tutoring services said that while they do one-on-one tutoring, they prefer to be involved in small group tutoring, which they saw as providing an opportunity for children to engage in shared learning with each other.

We also heard a strong appreciation for - and desire for more - communities of practice. During one conversation, a couple of people from the same organization serving Native and Indigenous children

"I am currently not affiliated with a specific community group in Central Oregon...but I would happily become involved with one that supports literacy learning...and works to align with/partner with our schools and library."

reflected on how important a community of practice has been for their larger team. The organization brought in a licensed teacher who helps train staff in early literacy development. Staff now also have a colleague who they can turn to for guidance and resources.

During the conversations with community groups, we saw people exchange ideas and resources and recognize each other’s particular skills, knowledge, and experiences. People shared links and resources in the Zoom Chat with one another and offered their email addresses to connect outside of the conversation. Multiple people noted that many early literacy toolkits – particularly aimed at supporting families with young children – already exist and encouraged ODE to draw from those.

### **DESIRE FOR MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

Many families expressed a strong desire to be more involved in supporting their children as they develop early literacy skills. Parents in several of the community conversations knew that they play a very important role for their children in developing these skills. At the same time, they voiced frustrations that they were unable to do all the activities they want to with their children. They noted the following challenges they face:

- Time constraints, including work obligations as well as when (time of day or day of the week) community activities are available;
- Language barriers;
- Lack of clear information about what their child is working on in settings outside the home;
- Differences in how parents themselves learned or developed those skills;
- Cultural differences in how families or parents are expected to interact with their child’s education; and

“The time that families have together is minimal and precious. It's hard to compete for their free time. I want the community to try to be creative about intergenerational support for families so that families are supported as teachers and have more opportunities for quality fun and learning time with their children in the community when they are able to take advantage of those opportunities.”

- Transportation to get to locations where they could access early literacy resources and support.

## WELCOMING AND BELONGING

Both families and people working for community groups emphasized the importance of having a welcoming, warm environment and reception the minute a family or child walks into the door of a space where children will get early literacy support. Some people talked about this in terms of materials (books that reflect their culture or language, for instance) while others talked about this in terms of a physical space (we heard people from different cultures talk about wanting to see a center or dedicated space that focused on their culture and language).

“It’s really important to create a space that is welcoming. One-on-one or group tutoring is intimate; it can almost be like a therapy session. We’re doing a lot of work with kids who might feel shame and are struggling.”

Several people also talked about the impacts that the person who greets or is the first point of contact can have on both the families’ and the children’s motivation to be involved, to advocate, to ask questions, and to seek out support. People want to be able to support their children and to share what they know about their children with other adults who are helping them with early literacy skills. Many families said that they would volunteer more or be more involved if they were invited, supported, and welcomed warmly. We heard this in particular in conversations with Spanish speaking families. At the same time, some of the community groups who participated in discussions voiced wanting more support and guidance in inviting families in. One person wondered aloud, “How do we invite families to *want* to do this?”

## DIFFERING VIEWS ON TECHNOLOGY

One notable area where people held differing views was how the use of technology might assist or inhibit children in developing early literacy skills.

People talked about technology in two ways: 1. a key resource for families and children to develop early literacy skills; and 2. an impediment or contributor to impediments in developing early literacy skills. In some of our conversations, we heard people say that they personally held both views about the role that technology plays – for better or worse – in early literacy development.

When people talked about how technology is or could be an important resource for them, they referred to different aspects. These include:

- Access computers for the children, as well as opportunities for adults to learn how to use computers and navigate digital resources;
- More audio and video captioning to support early literacy development; and
- Use of a variety of apps to teach and encourage different reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

“We have had great success with books that have built-in audio players, eg. Vox or Wonderbooks. They are picture books or early reader or early chapter books that have the audio attached directly to the book.”

On the other hand, many families and people from community groups voiced concerns about negative impacts that devices and technology could have on children’s development in key areas like reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Several families said they wanted to see support for families in creating boundaries with the use of phones and tablets in order to help children focus in other formats for developing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

In one community conversation with Nepali speaking families, people shared that they are concerned about how children develop writing skills, particularly writing on paper or by hand, when so much of their reading and writing activities seem to happen on a computer or a tablet. Multiple people in this conversation described how technology changed what learning looks like for them: when they were young, learning

looked like carrying half a dozen books and paper copies to school; now their children carry only one notebook and perhaps no other books at all.

“Yes, they can type and use a computer, but playing with computer is not enough. Writing with pen and paper is very important for learning.” (Translated from Nepali)

In another conversation with community groups, a few people cautioned about relying too much on technology for outreach about early literacy programs and resources to families. People described having varying levels of access to technology, particularly computers, and that many families use different modes of communication. One person said they “see a lot of QR codes, but families continue to struggle with technology” so aren’t then able to access the information that is out there.

## SECTION 4: Important Activities to Support Early Literacy

---

During the community connector interviews, we heard that people often do not see themselves as directly engaging in early literacy work or activities. Many of the people understood “early literacy” to refer to activities or skills that occur at between 0 to 5 years old. Other people voiced a sense that they couldn’t speak on the topic as they didn’t view themselves as “reading teachers” or having sufficient training or knowledge about what is involved in teaching children to read and write.

In many of our conversations, we re-framed the topic to encompass reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. At times, we began conversations by asking people what their favorite activity was to do with their children or with children they work with in the community. Caregivers could often quickly name a variety of activities that involve reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Notably, there was not a significant preference for any one particular type of activity; responses to the survey questions about the kinds of activities people both do and want to see as well as in many of the conversations didn’t indicate a particularly strong preference. As a result, the wants and needs are dispersed.

Some of the most frequently mentioned activities include:

- Reading together or reading to children
- Crafts, including traditional crafts from people’s home countries or cultures (both beading and sewing were mentioned multiple times)
- Listening to audiobooks
- Storytelling in many settings and across many relationships (elders telling stories as well as adults inviting children to tell stories)
- Games, including a number of games while riding in the car (“Rainbow game”, “ABC car game”)
- Riddles
- Tongue Twisters
- Conversations, such as recounting the day or events
- Writing in a diary or journal together (we heard this from both Chinese and Spanish speaking families)
- Physical activities like dancing, futbol, and walks in nature
- Music, including translating lyrics from one language to another
- Exercises between siblings or cousins, with the older child demonstrating and the younger repeating after them
- Puzzles
- Audio books
- Fairy tales (particularly mentioned by Ukrainian and Russian families)

When we asked families about what they were most interested in learning t in regards to helping their children develop reading, writing, and speaking skills, “[t]ypes of activities I can do with children in my family to help them develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills” was the top choice (18%). Even as families often could list off a number of activities they were already doing, they frequently voiced a strong desire to do even more with and for their children.

## **SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS, TOOLS, AND ACTIVITIES**

One of the successful tools that we heard repeated in almost every conversation was a literacy kit that community groups provide for free. People shared that they

frequently heard positive feedback from families about literacy kits. While community groups described some similar components in the kits they were familiar with, there was a variety of what each group provided in the kits. Materials people mentioned included:

- Whiteboards
- Markers
- Decodable books
- Board books (for younger children)
- Books or materials that reflect the community’s culture
- Materials in different languages (this includes multiple versions of the same kit in different languages as well as materials within the kit that are bilingual or multilingual)
- Videos to give families support in how to use the materials (usually through a QR code, though some people noted “we see a lot of QR codes, but many of our families continue to struggle with technology.”)
- Clear, simple instructions
- Bookmarks or bookmark-making activity
- Sets of questions or prompts for families to use with their children

One community group noted that the kit design process itself involved community-based organizations who participated in helping to design the kits. They thought that approach played a major part in how successful the kit had been in the community.

A number of people also talked about how significant it is to families’ and children’s sense of connectedness and belonging that the reflect a multitude of identities and culture. One person shared that even though they hadn’t played a role in creating a kit of board books for families with infants and babies, families regularly thanked them for them. They described the kits as “a gift” that they could continually provide to families. A few people described their organization’s kits as “STEM focused kits” that had literacy skills embedded in them. In a couple of conversations, this led to a discussion about how people wanted to see an integration of literacy skills development across other areas of learning like STEM.



A few of the kits that people pointed to as successful were focused more on parent education about literacy than on children as users of the kits. Some people also talked about programs that focus on adult literacy, either in combination with children or as a standalone program. We heard over and over again across different conversations and different groups that adult literacy plays an important role in different aspects of children’s literacy development. Some people described this as “generational literacy” or “multi-generational literacy.”

## **WHAT PEOPLE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE OF IN THEIR COMMUNITIES**

As with the kinds of activities that people are already doing with children in their communities and families, the list of what people want more of is long and varied. The gaps people experience often depend on where they live. While people recognize that there are barriers families face in accessing programs and services for their children in the Portland Metro area or other larger urban areas in the state, they also recognized that there are many opportunities. Many people in other parts of the state, particularly in less populated areas, often responded to questions about what exists with “there is nothing here.”

### **Tutoring**

One of the services people frequently talked about was low-cost or no-cost tutoring, particularly during times that working families can access the services. People frequently framed this in terms of a disproportionate need vs. availability of tutors and tutoring services. Many people believe that there are people out there who could serve in this role, but they’re not sure how to find potential tutors, don’t have funds to support them, and there’s a lack of capacity in organizations to be able to train and support tutors. More specifically, families with children who are learning in multiple languages would like tutors who can explain concepts related to early literacy skills in the child’s (or the family’s) home language. A

“Again, retirees are a huge resource for one-on-one tutoring. Research is showing how effective tutoring can be, if the tutors are trained in targeted instruction.”

few people expressed hope that the new focus on early literacy in Oregon and shifts in how early literacy skills are taught in Oregon schools will lead to a decrease in demand for tutors over time.

Some people specifically shared a need for “high-dosage tutoring.” As mentioned earlier, OKT did not explicitly inquire about or provide a definition for “high dosage tutoring” as rulemaking that will define “high dosage tutoring” is not yet completed. People provided their own descriptions of what “high dosage tutoring” looks like to them. We consistently hear high-dosage tutoring described as:

- Provided by people who are trained in evidence-based approaches to reading and writing
- Held multiple times a week for at least 30 minutes each time. Some people said 3-4 times a week. Other people said 2-3 times a week.
- Held in small groups. While some people generally said “Small groups”, other people specified “groups of 3 or fewer children.”

The group of people who were aware of high-dosage tutoring was small, however. Most people simply referred to “tutoring” without detailed descriptions of what could look like beyond people providing instruction one-on-one or in small groups.

## Materials

In discussions with people who are part of community groups, we heard a desire for more materials and resources that are not intimidating. One person framed this as “activities that anyone can easily pick up and initiate.” Community groups want to be able to provide materials and resources that feel like something families could easily integrate into their everyday schedules and activities. Some community groups shared that they see high turn-over with staff and volunteers and there often isn’t much time or capacity to train staff or volunteers.

Many participants – no matter how they identified – support continued access to materials, books, games, and literacy related events (e.g. book fairs) that reflect people’s culture, language, and experiences. We heard this especially from Black, Latinx, and Native and Indigenous community members and groups serving those communities, as well as from people who speak a language other than English or whose children are multilingual.

“I hope they can feel confident about our cultural origins as well as adapting to American culture.”

“Activities or materials families can use at home to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language” was the top choice (16%) that people selected when asked what they would like to learn more about.

Along with that excitement about the increase in access to those materials and books, we heard a deep concern that there may be a shift towards restrictions in access. For groups serving Black identifying families and youth as well as LGTBQ2SIA+ community members, this arose from recent increases in book bans both locally and nationally. Even if communities aren’t currently facing bans, they sensed that bans might be possible in the future or in other communities.

“I feel like we could be losing ground with Bans on Books movement. We’re just getting kids to start to get excited, but what is gonna be done to make sure those books don’t start getting pulled back?”

Ongoing funding to produce and purchase materials was also a concern. Several community groups recounted their recent efforts and future plans to continue to grow their libraries, offerings, materials, and resources to reflect the languages and culture of families they work with and serve. Many people described how challenging they have found it to find and procure materials in language other than English. This was illustrated in one group’s story about sending staff to a bookfair in Mexico to make sure they could access and procure high quality materials in Spanish for their programs. Finding materials, books, and resources in a language other than English or Spanish poses even more of a challenge for community members. Even if community groups

wanted to build their libraries to include materials or books in Ukrainian or Russian, for example, purchasing them from outside the United States can be logistically challenging and cost-prohibitive.

### “Science of Reading”

The “science of reading” came up in various conversations with community groups as well as with some families. We heard some desire to build awareness of the concepts and components that are evidence-based and grounded in research in community and schools. In fact, when we asked people with community groups what they would most like to learn about, “[r]esearch and evidence to understand what might work best for children” was one of the top two choices people selected (15%), though only by a few percentage points.

At the same time, many people also felt that it was very important to ground any kind of awareness campaign in accessible and easy-to-understand language. We generally heard that the term “science of reading” isn’t commonly used or understood among many program staff, volunteers, and families. This is discussed in further detail below in Section 5. Framework Content.

### Support for Children Who Experience a Variety of Disabilities

We heard from a number of families with children who experience a range of disabilities. Several participants in the conversations with community groups specified that they work with children with dyslexia. Overall, families and community groups voiced a strong desire for more awareness of and support for literacy interventions for children with learning disabilities. Tutoring – particularly targeted tutoring grounded in evidence-based instruction – came up as a key need, particularly given the demand versus availability of trained tutors, as well as the cost for families.

“Fondos para programas comunitarios preescolares para comprar materiales para niños con discapacidades/neurodivergentes. Espacios en las escuelas para programas comunitarios preescolares aptos para niños con discapacidades.” | “Funding for community preschool programs to purchase materials for children with disabilities/neurodivergent children. Spaces in schools for community preschool programs suitable for children with disabilities.”

Families also noted that some spaces are not accessible to children experiencing disabilities. People shared stories of trying to bring their children to venues where programming or activities were taking place; however, they often faced challenges in navigating spaces that couldn't accommodate the wheelchairs or other medical devices their children used. Sometimes this was due to the physical structure of the space itself. Other times, people described settings where multiple programs shared space, so materials, books, and furniture often created a crowded space.

People also shared they've observed that the long waits and lengthy timelines involved in identifying the disabilities that some children experience often cause families to give up on going through the process. If children aren't identified as having a particular disability, that makes providing targeted support and resources in early literacy that much harder if not impossible. Even if families go through the evaluation process, long delays in being able to find an intervention for younger students continues to create barriers to accessing the appropriate early literacy supports.

“Que algunos programas no tienen fondos para comprar materiales para niños con discapacidad. También el espacio que usan algunos programas es prestado por ejemplo las escuelas prestan salones de kinder para programas para niños preescolares y la mayoría de veces esos salones tienen muchas cosas y eso puede ser abrumador para niños con discapacidad.” | “Also the space that some programs use is borrowed, for example schools lend out kindergarten classrooms for preschool programs and most of the time those classrooms have a lot of stuff in them and that can be overwhelming for children with disabilities.”

### Support for Multilingual Learners

Throughout this process we observed a strong interest from families who have children learning in two or more languages in being part of the conversation around early literacy. In fact, given the time constraints on this particular project, we were unable to host the numbers of community conversations with community and families who expressed interest. Through the online and paper

“Надеюсь ребёнок научиться читать, писать и говорить на родном языке” | “I hope the child learns to read, write and speak the mother tongue”

surveys, nearly half of participants (47%) said they would prefer to receive information in a language other than English. This indicates a strong desire for ongoing, focused engagement efforts with families and communities with bilingual and multilingual learners.

We heard in many conversations - both with community groups and with families - the need for more bilingual staff in many of the spaces where children and families are seeking or getting early literacy support. This came up in a few different conversations; however, several families whose children are learning in Mam, Spanish, and English particularly emphasized this need. In addition, several families would like to have someone who can support multilingual children transitioning from one language to another one. Early literacy learning is complexified when students are learning in more than one language. Families had a strong interest in having people who have expertise in dual language acquisition. People also shared that having more bilingual staff provides more support, safety, and more confidence in families and children.

Families who speak Russian, Ukrainian, Chinese, Mam, Spanish, Chuukese, Nepali, and Marshallese expressed a strong desire to see a variety of offerings in their family's first language in early childhood through the first years of elementary school. Many people said this was an important factor in helping their children remain connected to their families, communities, and cultures while also helping to teach and instill a sense of identity. Several people noted that this allowed them to be able to provide support to and a foundation for their children at home in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, whether the adults in the family spoke English or not. For example, a group of Nepali speaking families shared that their children lack fluency in Nepali while the adults or caregivers lack fluency in English.

We heard from a few families that the early elementary school grades are often the time when they see their children shift away from reading, writing, speaking, and listening in their home languages. These families shared similar stories of noticing that their first or second graders responded to them less and less in their home language, instead responding in English. People expressed sadness and fear that their child would lose fluency in their home language and in turn connections to their culture, community, and large family circles.

People described activities that they do at home – including singing, dancing, arts and crafts, and reading - in their home language as well as some that occur in the community, such as cultural festivals and holidays. At the same time, we often heard that there is a lack of opportunities in the broader communities. Several community groups shared a desire to be able to hold more events and activities in the different languages people speak in their community and described having only one or two hours a week currently devoted to programming in a language other than English or reflecting a variety of cultures.

### Support for Systems Navigation and Family Advocacy

In several conversations with families, people voiced a desire for training for families with adults who did not go through the Oregon (or United States) school systems for their education about how subjects are taught. Methods vary widely in different communities and countries as well as over time. In addition to information about methods to teaching different subjects, some families said they would like to have more instruction on what students were expected to do in homework or other out-of-school work. Relatedly, several families in conversations conducted in Spanish also want to see more support for parents to assist children with schoolwork at home.

“Apoyo a los padres para que se involucren más en la educación de sus hijos y puedan ir a las escuelas sin sentirse rechazados o juzgados.” | “Support for parents to become more involved in their children's education and to be able to go to school without feeling rejected or judged.”

Both families and community groups shared that they would also like to have access to or to offer more training and support for families in how to advocate for their children and themselves in learning spaces and systems. “How to get support to understand what children in my family are learning at school about developing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills” was the second highest choice that families selected when asked what they would like to learn more about (14%).

In conversations, people mainly talked about this in terms of school systems, but we also heard this in terms of systems outside of school (after school programs, summer

programs, etc.). Many families in the different conversations emphasized how much they want to be able to support their children with early literacy, but a key part in being able to do that was understanding how learning and education systems even work and the skills to know who to go to and how to talk about what supports their child may need.

### Public Spaces and Activities

Many of the community members and groups we heard from would like to see more opportunities for people to gather collectively around early literacy activities. Story hours, reading tournaments, book clubs, and spelling bees (both in-person and on Zoom or online) were among some of the activities people wanted to be able to join in their community.

Both community groups and families described a lack of community gathering spaces in many different kinds of Oregon communities. In some places, community groups aren't able to access spaces due to costs. In others, there simply are not physical locations that are large enough, open to the public, or centrally located. Many people told us that the only space they could think of was their library branch, but even then, there are often major limitations. Not every community has a library branch or families struggle with reliable transportation to get to the library branch. In places where there is a library branch, reduced hours limit the ability to hold classes, programs, or activities – particularly in the evenings when families aren't working. And if a library does have community space, it is often small or doesn't meet the needs for some programs.

Beyond libraries, several people said their places of worship are important places to go for early literacy help in some way for their children. When people described more specifically what that looked like at their place of worship, they

“Наши доходы не позволяют нам арендовать собственное помещение и полноценно обслуживать население на 100%, предлагая различные мероприятия, обучающий мини-садик, программы в разное время дня. | “Our income does not allow us to rent our own space and fully serve the population 100% by offering various activities, an educational mini daycare, and programs at different times of the day.”



often referenced reading particular texts, such as the Bible, as the activity. In one conversation with people from different faith-based organizations, we heard a desire to find ways to more deliberately offer spaces for early literacy activities in the communities they are part of.

## **BARRIERS OR CHALLENGES FOR PROVIDING OR ACCESSING PROGRAMS, SERVICES, OR RESOURCES**

Many of the barriers or challenges that people have noticed or experienced are included throughout this report; however, there are a few barriers that emerged across different kinds of activities and organizations.

### **Funding**

When we asked people what barriers or challenges they saw in accessing or providing the activities and programs they'd like to have in their communities, people repeatedly mentioned funding related barriers. Many people talked about a lack of funding while others talked about a lack of consistent funding over time or restrictions on what

“There are a lot of things working really well but the cost is prohibitive. There are places that are doing fantastic work and private tutors doing fantastic work. The cost is what makes it not work well.”

funding could be used for. One example is that while there is a lot of demand and desire for family engagement, any funding that the organization receives is restricted to be used directly for children and not for adults in the families. Another person gave the example of challenges in being able to use funding towards office rental, which then limits the organization's ability to pay for larger office spaces that would allow them to host family gatherings, group activities, or offer a library for families to access books.

### **Time to Devote to Early Literacy Activities and Support**

Many families shared that they feel limited in what they can do to support their children due to how little time outside of work, school, and other activities they have

with their children. Community groups also raised available time as a challenge they see in the lives of the families they serve. One person who wrote “Недостаточно свободного времени” (“not enough free time”) summed up what we consistently heard from families. Many families said that even when there are activities in their communities, including in their own languages, they are often held during hours that families are working. One person from the Marshallese community shared that many families work late hours or graveyard shifts here in Oregon, which differs from the working hours families are used to on the Marshall Islands. In several conversations, people referenced the importance of finding ways to embed explicit early literacy skills development in everyday activities. Many people talked about how much happens in their cars, for instance, while transporting children, including games as well as discussions about their day or story sharing. Other people cited trips to places like the grocery store as another setting for fitting in some kind of early literacy activity.

### Early Literacy Feels Intimidating

Many people shared that “early literacy” feels intimidating. We heard this as different community groups were listening and talking to each other and in describing the wide variety of how much training in early literacy different groups have had or can access. One person shared that staff in community-based organizations they’ve been part of don’t necessarily see themselves or their programs as directly helping children develop early literacy skills even though they *are* actually doing that. They said, “It’s sometimes hard to convince after school staff that they are able to make an impact on early literacy.”

### Staffing Turnover and Consistency

Consistent staffing at community organizations (especially after-school organizations) affects several organizations’ abilities to provide early literacy-focused activities. Due to high turnover, activities are often planned so that anyone can pick them up and go. Lack of staff stability makes more complex activities and initiatives more challenging.

## SECTION 5: Framework Content

---

We gathered people’s input both directly and indirectly on what content they would like to see the Framework include for early literacy in the community and at home. During conversations with people who work for or volunteer with a community group, we asked direct questions about potential topic areas they would like to see included in the Framework (see *Appendix C. Zoom Conversations for Community Groups*). We also provided a list of example topics for people to reflect on and respond to while also asking for what they thought was missing. Even when we didn’t ask people to directly provide ideas about potential topics in the Framework, many people offered ideas that apply to potential Framework topics. We have included both direct and indirect responses in this section.

### “Science of Reading”

As we mentioned above in section 4, many people did suggest they would like to see the “Science of Reading” in the Framework. People working for community groups often expressed relief that they are seeing a shift towards the “science of reading” in how early literacy is taught in Oregon. On the other hand, in at least one community conversation, we heard agreement that there has been conflicting research, evidence, and approaches related to how children develop early literacy skills. It can be confusing and daunting to figure out what works best for children.

Another person said they find the framing of “5 components of literacy” to be more useful and accessible than the “science of reading.” We noticed a wide range of knowledge about the five components involved in early literacy and a wide range of comfort in speaking about them. Even people who seemed comfortable and fluent in early literacy concepts and terminology would also share that there was a lot they didn’t know or fully understand. There was widespread recognition that many of the ways people think about or talk about early literacy is too intimidating and requires a high level of education and expertise.

While families didn’t use the exact terminology that some of the people from community groups used, they did share many activities that involved practicing or

listening to the sounds of letters and words. Some families said that they enjoyed talking about where words might come from with their children. Even if they didn't attach specific early literacy terms to these activities, they recognized that the activities reinforced some components related to reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

### A Unified Approach

In a couple of Zoom conversations, people included communications or communications materials among the types of resources and materials they would like to see in the Toolkit. One person shared that they would like a “common way” that different entities – from schools to libraries to community groups engaged in early literacy – all use. Other people specified they would like to have simple templates to use for communications with families as well as “one pagers that describe what involvement in literacy could or would like” for community members.

People often spoke about partnerships - either existing ones or ones they want to see develop or change - when talking about helping children develop early literacy skills in any space.

One overarching theme we heard related to partnerships of different kinds was that people want more seamless connections across the different spaces where children are developing early literacy skills. Another person spoke about the potential for “literacy hubs” where families could “learn how to navigate systems, how to get support, and how a child / brain develops literacy skills.”

“家庭与学习中心同步进行，定期进行沟通学习进度。” |

“Synchronization between the home and the learning center, and regular communication on the progress of learning.”

### Partnerships with schools

We frequently heard a desire to see a shift in what these partnerships look like, especially in terms of how they could incorporate a sense of welcome and belonging for community groups and families in the school setting. Over 25% of participants – the largest group - said they do not currently have a partnership with schools. Others (17%)

have long-term partnerships or “sometimes partner for a short time” (16%) with schools to help children develop early literacy skills.

#### Partnerships between community groups

In a couple of conversations, people mentioned community garden programs as providing an opportunity for creating connections and teaching children to learn different ways of “growing and reading.” Another person identified an opportunity they see to partner with public transportation departments and agencies around a public campaign to raise awareness about early literacy activities that families could incorporate into their daily routines or about the ways that children develop early literacy skills.

#### Partnerships with libraries

Libraries were frequently spoken of as important partners for organizations in carrying out their own work. We heard this most frequently in reference to library staff support culturally specific programming such as Indigenous library teams who regularly work with youth in other organizations.

#### Partnerships with institutions of higher education

Some people voiced a desire to connect with institutions of higher education that could both train people in early literacy teaching as well as in provide trained and skilled tutors in communities. Several people pointed to Eastern Oregon University’s tutoring program that trains university students in early literacy instruction and then connects to families to provide tutoring.

“听说比较容易教育，读写需要学校 家长以及社区协力才可以提升。希望能有培训家长如何知道孩子提升读写能力的培训，以及更多的课外活动可以要孩子参加。”  
| “Listening and speaking are easy to teach, but reading and writing require the cooperation of the school, parents and the community. I hope that there will be training for parents to know how to improve their children's reading and writing skills, and more extracurricular activities for children to participate in.

## Responses to Example Topics

When given some examples of potential Framework topics, “Cultural Identity Development” and “Family Engagement” resonated strongly for most people, no matter their role, type of organization they were part of, or specific community group they served. Several people noted that they saw the potential for “Cultural Identity Development” to be used as a lens across all Framework topics. Many people noted that “Family Engagement” was at the core of their work, though they raised areas or questions within this topic that they thought the Framework could address:

- Do we have the tools to do family engagement?
- How invitations in invite families in happen and in what ways
- How can we help our “families believe that they truly have the power to help their children learn”?

There were mixed reactions to a few of the examples, however. These included “Giving Back to the Community,” “Leadership Development,” and “Wrap Around Services.” For some people, this framing made sense while others struggled to see how it connected directly to what they and their organization did or how they perceive early literacy development.

In one conversation, people discussed different ways that “Leadership Development” could appear in relation to early literacy or how they might apply it in their work. Some people saw this as relating to adult leadership development, either staff in organizations as early literacy leaders within their organization or families taking on leadership roles, such as staying with a program to act as a mentor or guide to families coming into a program. Other people saw “Leadership Development” in terms of children. One person shared that they saw early literacy skills as being foundational to leadership skills. A few people shared stories about youth in their programs who they observed in leadership roles as teenagers demonstrating their strengths in those early literacy skills (speaking and listening were mentioned in particular) that they’d developed at a younger age.

While several people who participated in both the survey and the conversations with community groups talked about either working with or serving as a volunteer, we did hear some concerns about relying too much or entirely on volunteers. One person

explained: “Проводить на уровне волонтерства такие мероприятия считаю бессмысленным, так как организация будет слабой и большого интереса у публики не вызовет, а значит, не будет достигнута цель, а мероприятие проведено «для галочки».” (“I think it is pointless to hold such events at the volunteer level, as the organization will be weak and will not instill much interest among the community, which means that the goal will not be achieved and the event will be held "for a check mark".”)

Many people agreed that “Wrap Around Services” is hugely important in their work, for their families and communities, and for supporting early literacy skills development, particularly when talking about meeting children’s basic needs to be able to learn. Some people talked about wanting to help provide food for families and children alongside activities or learning. Other people mentioned housing stability or mental health supports as particularly important related needs to support families and children. We also heard concerns about how community groups could or would be able to meet those needs, given capacity, funding, and the mission of some organizations. One person suggested that community groups could “think about layering services and reducing barriers in where or how services are offered. Not every service needs to tick every box as long as we all together have a suite of offerings for families that meet different needs. No one community entity can effectively do all of those things at scale.” Given the focus of this engagement process on early literacy skills support; however, this effort didn’t delve deeply into exploring specific wrap around services. ODE might consider further exploration in particular areas, such as links between housing stability and early literacy or mental health supports and early literacy.

### Age Ranges

People also offered their own ideas for additional topics or components they would like to see ODE include. One of the most common suggestions centered around what ages the Framework and Toolkit covered.

Many people said that the current legislation seems to overlook older students in late grade school and middle school. One person referred to this current group of students as having “experienced radical disruptions in learning” over the past few years

due to COVID and its aftermath. People working in community organizations frequently told us that the biggest group of students they are providing early literacy services and support to are 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th graders. While in age they may not be considered “early literacy” learners, the skills they are developing fall under what many people consider to be “early literacy” skills or levels of those skills. We heard concern about this age group being “left behind” because they are past third grade and the grades or ages that the Early Literacy Success Initiative addresses.

### Additional Topics

Other components or framing that people thought would be important to have include:

- Centering and honoring children and families.  
One person noted, “Early Literacy is Family Literacy,” while someone else said, “Early Literacy is Community Literacy.”
- Comprehension skills. A parent of a deaf child in particular noted that comprehension was an equally important skill that is often left out of both how people talk about and provide early literacy support for families and children.
- Language development as core to early literacy skills development
- Recognition that all children learn differently.
- Consideration of different contexts or roles: This could be one-on-one guidelines, guidelines for parents or other family members, guidelines for people providing instruction like tutoring, etc.
- Connectivity: This was mentioned in particular regarding how community groups can connect with one another to better meet families’ needs of many different kinds.

“Kids learn best when they feel honored, understood, and included, and when what they’re learning feels relevant to them.”



- Interaction: Families and people working with community groups often noted how fundamental interactions of many kinds are between children and the caring adults in their families and communities are.

“When a child doesn’t have too much access to books, they can still have access to the parent’s (caring adult’s) attention and the parent (caring adult) as teacher.”

In our discussions about potential Framework topics, people often offered up different models or frameworks that they thought could overlap with the example topics, are already used in their own programs, or could be incorporated into a framework for early literacy in the community and at home. Two examples shared were the 4-H Thriving Model and Conscious Discipline.

## **SECTION 6: Recommendations for Future Community Outreach and Engagement Opportunities**

---

Oregon’s Early Literacy Community Grants program offers a new opportunity to recognize, honor, and support the ways that children develop early literacy skills in community settings and at home. Over the course of the community engagement activities this spring we noticed a few areas that ODE could consider to engage additional community members.

One of the areas that we heard people value and wonder about across different forms of input, community groups, and families was connection, particularly the connections between families and community groups, families and schools, community groups and schools, and community groups themselves. We recommend ODE consider further engagement opportunities that would explore and meet this desire for connection.

## Living and Adaptable Framework and Toolkit

ODE could approach the Framework and Toolkit as “living” for ongoing review and adaptation as the Community Grants program rolls out and community groups use the Framework and Toolkit in their work. As a new program ODE might consider the Framework and the Toolkit they are creating in 2024 as a first iteration. Oregon is undertaking a shift in how we approach early literacy in different settings; it will take some time to see how people respond, what people learn over these first years of implementation, and what successes people can point to.

## Spaces for Shared Learning

People are appreciative of the opportunities to be asked what they think and to be able to engage in shared spaces with one another to build capacity and momentum for early literacy in Oregon. The appreciation to be able to do that in community was evident to us during the Zoom conversations with community groups and the gatherings with families. There is a hunger for shared learning as well as spaces to celebrate the work that people are already doing. ODE could consider where there are opportunities or partnerships to convene people – in a joyful and fun environment - who care deeply about ways that communities and families support children in early literacy.

“I think the importance of these skills has been lost on the community. Perhaps informational campaigns that show the value of these skills throughout life. That campaign could lead into a live interactive seminar wherein the community is encouraged to engage in real time discussion surrounding these topics, perhaps followed by a workshop of sorts.”

## Targeted Engagement

We suggest considering targeted, focused engagements with particular communities alongside future iterations of the Framework and Toolkit. While we did hear from many communities and families throughout this process, given the strong interest and enthusiasm for conversations around early literacy with communities and families whose children are bilingual and multilingual learners, we encourage ODE to consider ongoing engagement efforts that focus on multilingual learners and early literacy. The

new Community Grants program offers the potential for direct partnerships with community groups who are serving particular families and children. ODE could utilize cohort or community of practice models with grantees to engage in shared learning. ODE could then apply those learnings to adapting the Framework and Toolkit over time or adding in additional resources and sections to the existing Framework and Toolkit. ODE could also consider developing community-specific Toolkits to create a collection that provides very specific resources, guidance, and tools for particular children.

### Areas for Deeper Inquiry

What we heard now provides ODE several opportunities for more focused, deeper engagement on a few areas where we noticed energy, excitement, or differing viewpoints. While there were many topics that participants clearly feel passionate about and that no doubt the Framework and Toolkit will cover or touch upon, there were a few areas where ODE might consider deeper engagement. Those areas include: the roles of different types of technology in early literacy in the community and at home; the links and opportunities for better alignment and partnerships between schools, families, and community groups; and best practices and approaches to measuring children’s progress over time.

## SECTION 7: Conclusion

---

Over the course of this engagement process, many people emphasized how deeply they feel connect to this topic personally as well as for their families and their larger communities. Multiple people referred to early literacy as their “passion” or – as some people said - “a gift to people.” While this particular period of community engagement concludes with the development of the Early Literacy Community Grants Framework and Toolkit in the coming months, we encourage ODE to return to community members to share how their input was used to create the Framework and Toolkit.

Throughout this process, several people wondered where there could be spaces to work jointly across organizations, communities, and families to learn from each other,

exchange ideas and resources, and to advance early literacy across Oregon in a multitude of ways. To return to one suggestion a participant shared in a Zoom conversation, the Framework and Toolkit could provide an important starting point for joint work: a shared, common language that Oregonians– no matter who they are or how much they know about early literacy – can use around how we help young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

## Appendix A. Annotated Survey: Early Literacy in Communities and at Home

WELCOME!

Would you please answer some questions in this survey about helping children in Oregon develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills?

In 2023 the Oregon Legislature passed a bill called the [Early Literacy Success Initiative](#). This bill directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to help community groups and families support young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. This is to take place both in the community and at home. ODE is partnering with Oregon’s Kitchen Table to hear from people across the state about this topic.

Your input will help ODE create a set of tools for community groups and families. By filling out this survey, you can help make sure that these tools are helpful for communities.

### BACKGROUND

#### **What is the Early Literacy Success Initiative’s Community Grants?**

This [state program](#) is part of Oregon’s focus on helping young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. It will provide funding to help community groups start and grow programs to help families and children. The Oregon Department of Education (ODE) will also create tools to support community groups.

#### **Will my answers on this survey be private?**

Yes. All answers will be private. That is, confidential. They will not be tied to your name or contact information, if you choose to share those at any time.

#### **How will ODE use the results of this survey?**

ODE will get a report. It will be based on the answers from this survey and from the conversations. It will help ODE create tools for community groups and families to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language.

We will share the report with people who choose to share their emails. We will also post the report on Oregon’s Kitchen Table’s [website](https://www.oregonskitchentable.org/results) - <https://www.oregonskitchentable.org/results>.

### QUESTIONS

**We are going to ask you some questions about your community and your family. Family means that there is a child or children you care about a lot. They may or may not be related to you. We will also ask you questions about helping children to develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. These can be in any language.**

**1. What has your experience been with helping children in Oregon develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills? This can be in any language. Please select all that apply.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Respondents to this question = 656</b>
There is a child who is between 5 and 10 years old in my family.	36%
There is a child who is between a baby and 5 years old in my family.	20%
I work or have worked in an Oregon elementary school.	8%
I work or have worked in an Early Childhood program. This is a program that serves children from babies to 5 years old.	10%
I work for a community group. We have programs to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	7%
I work for a community group. We want to start a program to help develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	4%
I work for a community group. We have programs that serve certain cultural groups in the community.	6%
I am or have been part of Early Literacy efforts in another way. Please describe:	10%

**There are many types of activities that help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language. Here are some of them:**

- Reading and talking about books together
- Talking about recipes while you cook together
- Singing songs and nursery rhymes
- Listening to an elder tell a story
- Embroidery, beading, and doing other crafts together that are important in different cultures
- Playing games like I Spy and talking about what you can see, taste, smell, and hear

**2. What are some activities that you or your community do to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills? These can take place in your home or your community. These can be in any language.**

*Responses provided to ODE.*

**If you have or are working with children of a specific age, please let us know.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Responses to this question = 332</b>
Between 5 and 10 years of age	23%
Between newborn to 5 years of age	32%
Between newborn to 10 years of age	11%
Over 10 years of age	16%
Children of all ages	19%

**3. What activities would you like to see more of in your community to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills? These can take place in your home or your community. These can be in any language. Please select the three that most appeal to you. Only select three.**

**I would like to see more of these:**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Total answers = 940</b>
Tutor children in writing and reading.	13%
Train people to tutor children in writing and reading.	13%
Offer more ways for children to practice language in the culture and first language of my community.	15%
Offer more access to children's books that reflect my community's culture, language, and experiences.	11%
Offer more options to help children learn to speak and listen.	7%
Offer storytelling or more options to listen to stories.	9%
Offer writing workshops or events to meet the author of a book.	5%
Offer activities like cooking, singing, music, arts, and crafts.	18%
Offer support in my language so I can help my child.	3%
Offer other activities to promote reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Please describe:	5%

**4. Outside of school, where do you and others go to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language? Please select all that apply.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Total answers = 1457</b>
My home	19%
The homes of other family members or friends	11%
Libraries	18%
Doctor's offices or health clinics	3%
After school programs	11%
Camps or summer programs	9%
Places of worship	6%
Parks and recreation classes or programs	8%
Community centers or cultural centers	7%
Bookstores	7%
Other. Please describe:	2%

**These next two questions are for people who work for a community group. If you do not work for a community group, please go to question 7.**

- 5. If you work for a community group, what would you like to learn more about as regards helping children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language? Please select your top three choices. Only select three.**

**I would like to learn more about:**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Total answers = 446</b>
Research and evidence to understand what might work best for children.	15%
How to provide tutoring.	8%
How to provide support to students who experience a disability.	9%
How to provide support to families and children from different cultures.	11%
How to adapt programs or tutoring for different students. For instance, students with a disability or students who learn in more than one language.	10%
How to use different formats to teach. For instance, written or print, video, apps or modeling skills in person.	11%
Skills children learn at different ages. For instance, reading, writing, speaking, and listening.	13%
Activities or materials families can use at home to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language.	16%
Ways to connect with other community groups that help families and children.	7%
Other. Please describe:	1%

**What are some of the barriers or opportunities you see for offering these activities?**

*Responses provided to ODE.*

- 6. How does your community group partner with schools to support families and help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills? Please select all that apply.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Total answers = 206</b>
We have a long-term, ongoing partnership with a school to help young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	17%
We sometimes partner with schools for a short time to help young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	16%
We have a formal partnership or agreement with schools. For instance, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a contract.	13%
We used to partner with schools to help young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills but no longer do.	8%
We partner with schools on other programs but not to help young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	12%
We do not partner with schools.	26%
Other. Please describe:	9%



**Could you share some more about the partnerships your group has with schools, if you have them?**

*Responses provided to ODE.*

**Please answer the next two questions if you are a family member of a young child or children. If you are not, please go to question 9.**

**7. What would you like to learn more about as regards to helping the child or children in your family develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language?**

**Please select your top three choices. Only select three.**

**I would like to learn more about:**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Total answers = 804</b>
How to get more access to books or other materials that honor my family's culture.	10%
How to get more access to books or other materials in the language my family speaks.	11%
Types of activities I can do with children in my family to help them develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	18%
How to find tutoring support for children in my family.	12%
How to get more training for myself to support children in my family develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	13%
How to get clear information about how children in my family are doing with learning to read, write, speak, or listen.	10%
How to get support to understand what children in my family are learning at school about developing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.	14%
Places in my community where I can get help developing reading and writing skills for myself or for other family members.	10%
Other. Please describe:	1%

**If you want to, please share more about the choices you selected.**

*Responses provided to ODE.*

**8. What hopes do you have for children in your family as they develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills? Please write your answer in one short sentence.**

*Responses provided to ODE.*

**9. Is there anything else you would like to share with us about helping families and children as they develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills? This can be about helping in communities or at home. This can be in any language.**

*Responses provided to ODE.*

Now we will ask some questions about you. This helps us know we are hearing from different communities in Oregon. You can choose to answer these or not.

**10. How old are you?**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Responses to this question = 385</b>
17 years old and younger	3%
18 to 29 years old	8%
30 to 39 years old	30%
40 to 49 years old	32%
50 to 59 years old	15%
60 to 69 years old	4%
70 or older	4%
I prefer not to answer	1%

**11. Which county in Oregon do you live in? (27 / 36 counties)**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Responses to this question = 353</b>
Baker County	<1%
Benton County	1%
Clackamas County	11%
Clatsop County	16%
Columbia County	<1%
Coos County	1%
Crook County	<1%
Deschutes County	1%
Douglas County	<1%
Harney County	<1%
Hood River County	<1%
Jackson County	3%
Jefferson County	<1%
Josephine County	<1%
Klamath County	<1%
Lane County	2%
Lincoln County	1%
Linn County	1%
Malheur County	5%

Marion County	3%
Multnomah County	32%
Tillamook County	1%
Umatilla County	3%
Union County	<1%
Wasco County	<1%
Washington County	14%
Yamhill County	<1%

**12. Which races and ethnicities do you consider yourself to be? Please mark all that apply.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Total Answers = 448</b>
American Indian, Alaska Native	3%
Canadian (Inuit, Métis and First Nation)	<1%
Indigenous Mexican, Central American, South American	4%
Asian Indian	<1%
Chinese	10%
Filipino	<1%
Japanese	<1%
Korean	<1%
Vietnamese	1%
Other Asian	<1%
African (Black)	<1%
Black, African American	3%
Mexican	17%
Central American	4%
South American	3%
Hispanic or Latinx	2%
Middle Eastern	<1%
Native Hawaiian	<1%
Marshallese, Micronesian, Palauan	3%
Other Pacific Islander	5%
Slavic	11%
Eastern European	3%
Western European	15%
Other White	12%

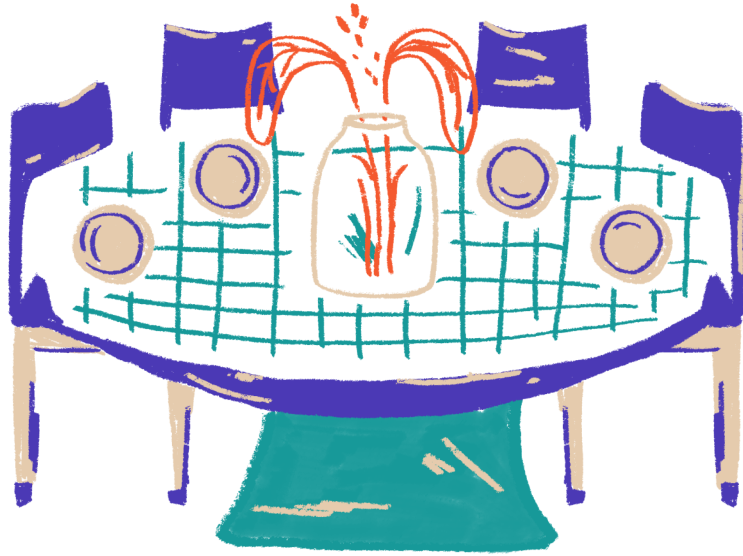
**13. What language do you prefer to get information in?**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Responses to this question = 387</b>
Arabic	<1%
English	53%
Chuukese	7%
Mandarin	7%
Russian	8%
Somali	<1%
Spanish	22%
Ukrainian	3%
Another language not listed here	<1%

**14. Do you or your children identify with any of the following communities? Check all that apply.**

<b>RESPONSE CATEGORY</b>	<b>Total Answers = 432</b>
Tribal member or citizen	3%
LGBTQ2SIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, 2 Spirit, Intersex, Asexual, plus other non-heterosexual orientations or genders)	5%
English learner	17%
Experience a disability	15%
Have been or am without a house	5%
Immigrant or refugee	19%
Migrant worker or student	7%
Child in foster care	2%
None of these	28%

**Thank you for sharing!**



# **KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATION GUIDE:**

## **Families with Young Children**

### **Early Literacy in Communities and at Home**



[WWW.OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG](http://WWW.OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG)



This Guide is for anyone in Oregon who wants to organize and host a Kitchen Table Conversation with their family, friends, or neighbors about early literacy in Oregon. Early literacy means young children developing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

We hope this Guide provides helpful ideas for organizing a community conversation, a structure for what to talk about during the conversation, and a clear way to summarize what people shared and get it to OKT.

If you need support or assistance, please reach out! Email [info@oregonskitchentable](mailto:info@oregonskitchentable) or call (503)725-5248.

# CONTENTS

Our Approach

---

Gathering People

---

Purpose / Background

---

Guiding the conversation

---

Gathering input

---

Tips and templates

---

# OUR APPROACH

Oregon's Kitchen Table strives to include all Oregonians in the decisions that affect their lives, with a particular focus on reaching, engaging, and hearing from Oregonians who have been left out of traditional public processes.

We work with organizers, translators, and interpreters so materials and online and in-person consultations are available for Oregonians who speak a wide variety of languages and learn in a variety of ways.

We recognize that people bring all different levels of knowledge and familiarity regarding issues / policies. We use approaches to ensure those who may not have as in-depth knowledge can still respond and share what they believe and have experienced. People participate in many different ways: through online and paper surveys, individual or small group interviews, culturally specific and community events, festivals, listening sessions, or public meetings open to anyone.

One of the approaches we use is what we call a Kitchen Table Conversation: a group of people gathering together to learn from each other and share what they think in the language, setting, and format that is most comfortable for them.



# GATHERING PEOPLE TO TALK

## INVITATION

Use whatever method people will pay attention to, but make sure it feels warm, welcoming, and inviting. It might be a text, a phone call, What'sApp, a social media post, or an email. Some people set up e-invites. Make clear the time, place, purpose, what to expect (food or participant incentive), and if they need to RSVP.

## GROUP SIZE

10-12 people is a nice size. But larger groups can be broken up into smaller groups. And you can still have a good conversation with 2-3 people.

## FORMAT

You can meet in person, over Zoom, or group chat (people have used WhatsApp before, for example). You can talk while planting trees or clearing out invasive species. You can have the conversation on a bus during a field trip. Hold the conversation in a space that is easy and comfortable for people in your community.





# WELCOME

## HOST

Think of yourself as the host, welcoming people at your table,

## FOOD

If you are in person, have food! Even a simple snack (popcorn, cookies, water, fruit) will help people feel welcome.

## FUN

If you're in-person or virtual, have some element of fun and joy that makes sense for your group: music, a short game, decorations.

## ACTIVITY

Have an opening activity that allows for all to say something at the beginning so that they can get comfortable. For example, you could invite everyone to share a favorite song, story, or book.



# ROLES FOR CO-HOSTS

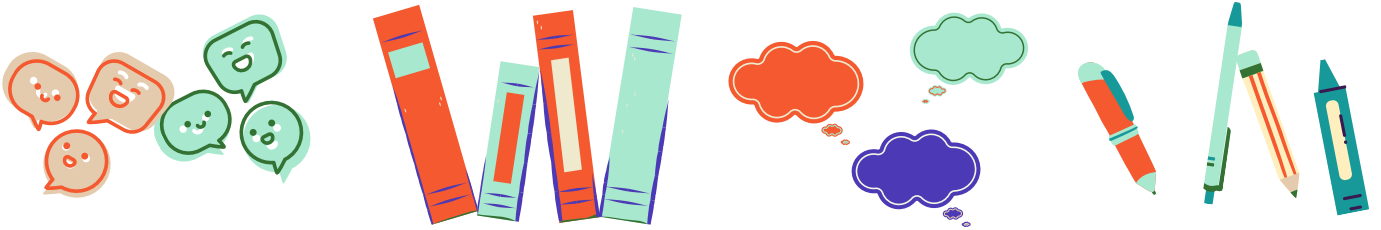
If you are working with a partner or a team to co-host a conversation, decide who will take which role. Here are some common roles. You could also invite participants to join you and take on one of these roles.



- Facilitator: Guides conversation, asks questions, and helps capture themes, commonalities, or differences.
- Notetaker: Captures what people say. Bullet points are fine! If the notetaker can get any good quotes, that's great but not required.
- Timekeeper: Use a clock (phone works!) to help make sure that there's enough time for each part of the conversation. Give facilitator / group time warnings.
- Reporter: If there are small group discussions, shares a summary of what the group discussed for the whole group.
- Observer: Helps the Facilitator make sure everyone gets a chance to talk or that no one person takes up too much time.

# PURPOSE FOR GATHERING

Explain why you've inviting people in your community to gather together to talk about how families and communities support children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Below is a description of what the decision is and why it matters. You can read this or summarize in your own words.



In 2023 the Oregon Legislature passed a bill called the Early Literacy Success Initiative. This bill directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to help community groups and families support young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. This is to take place both in the community and at home. ODE is partnering with Oregon's Kitchen Table to hear from people across the state about this topic.

Input from families with young children and community groups will help ODE create tools for community groups and families to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language.

# GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

## 1. BACKGROUND

People have different experiences and knowledge about the topic. We honor all of those experiences and knowledge. Share the basic background provided in the "Purpose for Gathering" section.

## 2. QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION



OKT has developed a few questions with the decision maker. We usually have a few main questions to ask people. We also have follow up questions if people need some direction in responding or if there's extra time.

## 3. HOW TO SPEND YOUR TIME TOGETHER

It's ok if people want to spend time on just one or two questions. We want to know where their interests and energies are, so that's fine!



## 4. CONFIDENTIALITY



Let people know that their names or anything that identifies them won't be shared. You'll give OKT a summary of what you all talked about. OKT will combine all the input from different conversations, surveys, and other ways people share what they think.

# CONVERSATION QUESTIONS

**What are some activities that you or your community do to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills?**

These can take place in your home or your community. These can be in any language. Some examples:

- Reading and talking about books together
- Talking about recipes while you cook together
- Singing songs and nursery rhymes
- Listening to an elder tell a story
- Embroidery, beading, and doing other crafts together important in your culture
- Playing games like I Spy and talking about what you can see, taste, smell, and hear

Follow up: Where do you go to do these activities?

**What activities would you like to see more of in your community to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills? These can take place in your home or your community and in any language.**

Follow up: What are some of the barriers or opportunities you see for these activities?

**What would you like to learn more about as regards to helping children in your family develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language?**

Follow up: Why are these important to you?



## CONNECTING BACK

Let people know where their input will go and how it will be used. You can use the timeline on the next page. Also let them know that you will connect with Oregon's Kitchen Table with whatever questions came up and circle back to people with any answers.

## INVITING MORE VOICES

Share information about ways that people can invite others they know to share what they think. Use the flyers with the link and QR code included after the summary templates.

## APPRECIATIONS

Let people know how important their input is and we appreciate hearing their ideas, thoughts, experiences and time on this important issue. You can invite everyone to share their appreciations for each other.

## ACTIVITY

If there's time, you can invite people to share aloud. If there's not time, have post-it notes or cards for people to write or draw their response to a closing question: One example: "What is a hope you have for the children in your family or community as they develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills?"



## 1. INVITE YOUR NEIGHBORS TO PARTICIPATE

We are gathering input from March 11 through April 20, 2024.

Invite other people you know to share what they think!

<https://tinyurl.com/okt-earlyliteracy>

Scan here with your phone:



## 2. OKT REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

OKT will provide a report of what we heard to ODE. We will post the report and a summary of that report in 9 languages on the OKT website. We will also share it with anyone who gave us their contact information.

## 3. HOW ODE WILL USE THE INPUT

Your input will help ODE create a framework and a toolkit for community groups and families to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language.

## 4. HOW COMMUNITIES CAN USE THE TOOLKIT

ODE will make the toolkit available later in spring 2024. Community groups can use the toolkit to guide and support their work helping families and young children.



# TIPS FOR SUMMARY

- ~ Bullet points are fine! This is a summary not a formal report.
- ~ Let us know any areas where there is agreement or disagreement in people's perspectives.
- ~ Let us know if there are any unique perspectives (an idea / experience / belief one person shared even if others didn't have it).
- ~ Add your observations/reflections: Feelings, sense of issues, concerns, positive experiences.
- ~ Let us know if there's anyone we ought to follow up with on any ideas they shared.
- ~ Share any questions about the project that you couldn't answer and who to follow up with.
- ~ Include any pictures from the conversation. Make sure to ask permission first!







# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Date / Place:

# of people:

General description of the group (age ranges, languages spoken, any ways the group might identify themselves):

Opening activity (what you did, anything anyone shared):

Activities people do now to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills



# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Places people go for these activities

Activities people would like to see more of

Barriers or opportunities for these activities



# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

B-15

What people would like to learn more about

Why these are important for people

Closing activity (what you did, what people shared)



# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Areas of agreement among the group

Areas of disagreement among the group

Unique perspectives

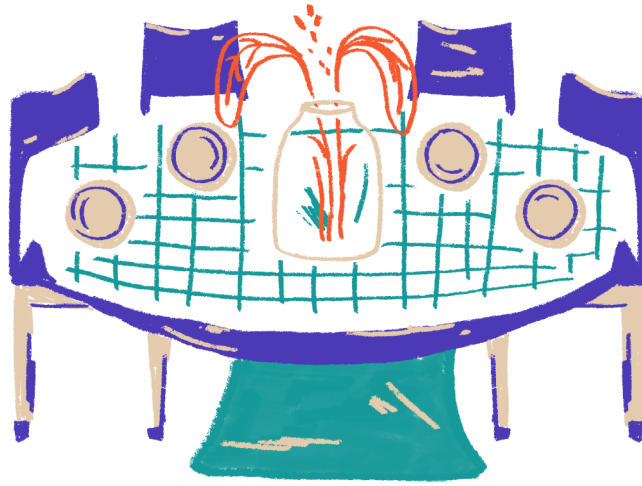


# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Areas where someone was persuaded by someone else's point of view

Any observations you had

Direct quotes



**QUESTIONS?  
IDEAS?  
NEED SUPPORT?  
CONTACT US!**



503-725-5248



[INFO@OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG](mailto:INFO@OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG)



[WWW.OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG](http://WWW.OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG)





# ***WELCOME!***

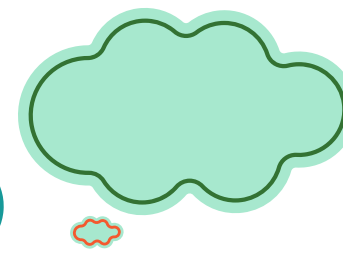
**Please share in the chat :**

- **Name**
- **Where you are joining from today**
- **One activity you like to do with children to help them develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills**

# INTRODUCTIONS



Oregon's Kitchen Table is a statewide program that creates ways for community members to influence the decisions that affect their lives.





# Today's discussion

## Our Goal:

To hear and learn from each other about what could be helpful to you and your community organization as you support families and children with early literacy programs and activities.

This will help ODE create a toolkit and framework that helps you in your work.



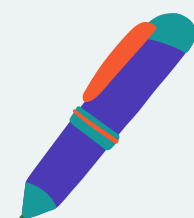
**BACKGROUND**



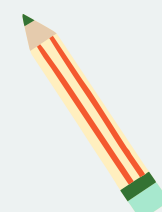
**PAIRS / TRIOS ~ SHARE**



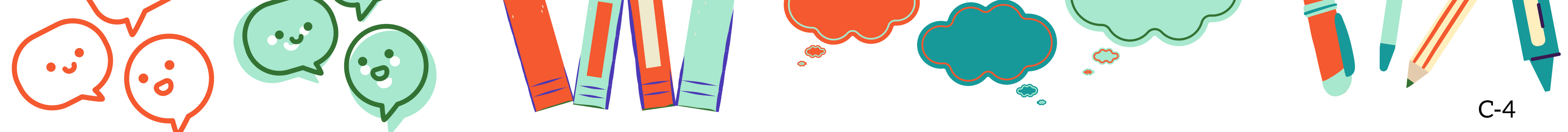
**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION**



**WHOLE GROUP DISCUSSION**



**NEXT STEPS AND  
APPRECIATIONS**



# **DISCUSSION GUIDELINES**

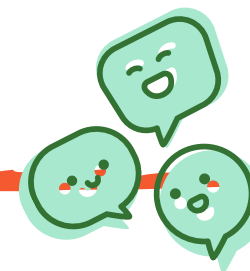
**help us hear  
everybody**

**be  
respectful of  
your  
neighbors**

**listen with  
curiosity**

**everyone  
brings different  
experiences  
and ideas**

# PROJECT BACKGROUND



## 2023: Spring

Legislature passes Early Literacy Success Initiative

### Early Literacy Success Community Grants program

Framework and toolkit to help those community-based organizations.

## 2024: Winter - Spring

ODE is working with OKT to hear from people across the state about this issue.

Different ways to participate through April 10th

## 2024: Spring

There will be a summary report.

This will help ODE create materials for community groups and families to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills

The materials will be available later this spring.



## **PAIRS / TRIOS**

**8 minutes in groups of 2 or 3**

What stands out for you in your work recently supporting families and children around developing literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills)? One thing you've noticed recently?

# DISCUSSION

What do you see that is working well to support families and children develop literacy skills (writing, reading, speaking, and listening)?

In particular, what do you see working well for families and children that:

- is culturally responsive
- supports families and children who are learning English as a new language or are multilingual learners
- supports children who experience a disability



- 15 minutes
- Choose a notetaker and reporter
- Share notes on Padlet (link in chat)
- OKT team will help

# DISCUSSION

The Framework could cover a number of different topics related to both early literacy and families and communities.

Examples:

- Cultural identity development
- Academic supports
- Leadership development
- Giving back to the community
- Wraparound services
- Family engagement

- **What are your thoughts about these kinds of topics?**
- **What resonates with you? What doesn't?**
- **What else would you like to see?**



- 20 minutes
- Choose a notetaker and reporter
- Share notes on Padlet (link in chat)
- OKT team will help

# SHARE IN THE CHAT

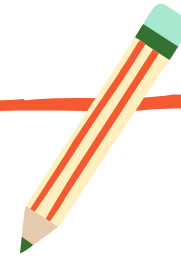
What is a hope you have for the families and children in your community as they develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills?



# NEXT STEPS



OKT will create a summary of what we heard from community groups and families with young children.



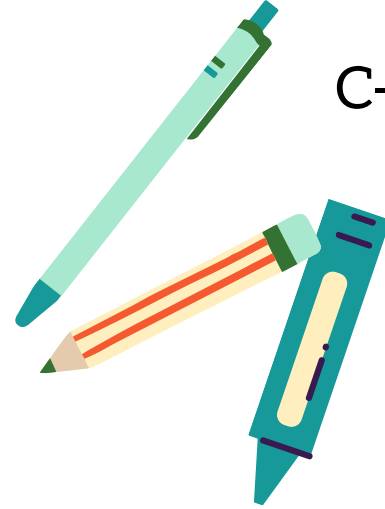
ODE will create the framework and toolkit with your input.



ODE will share the toolkit and framework with community groups later this spring







**More info from ODE:**

<https://www.oregon.gov/ode/EarlyLiteracySuccessInitiative/Pages/CommunityGrantResources.aspx>

**OKT Contacts for any follow up::**

Sarah Giles (sagiles@pdx.edu)

Meaghan Lingo (mlingo@pdx.edu)

