



Building Bridges Between Early Learning and K-3 Professionals: Outcomes from Recent State Investments

In Oregon, state and local communities are working together to ensure that young children are ready for school when they start kindergarten. Research suggests that creating smooth transitions and consistent experiences across early learning and kindergarten contributes to student success in 3rd grade and beyond.¹ To do this, Oregon’s Early Learning Hubs are using Kindergarten Readiness Partnership and Innovation (KRPI) funds to create opportunities for early learning and kindergarten professionals to come together to learn about each other’s work and to participate in shared training and professional development (PD). These investments show promising results in creating intentional pathways from early learning to kindergarten, and elevating the importance of social emotional learning – the essential skills children need to be successful. Key findings from the 2018 KRPI evaluation conducted by Portland State University’s *Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services* are summarized below.²



KRPI Shared Professional Development

In 2018, nine of the 16 Early Learning Hubs administered outcomes surveys to assess skill and knowledge acquisition, as well as attitudinal change, following participation in 19 different shared professional development activities, such as curriculum training (e.g. STEM, KITS) and professional learning teams. Outcomes surveys were collected from 360 participants including 178 early learning providers (ELPs) and 182 K-3 staff.

Shared PD Fosters Essential Shared Understanding Between Early Learning & K-3 Staff

Children benefit when early learning providers and Kindergarten teachers work in partnership to support children’s learning.³

KRPI Research Findings

Shared PD helps Kindergarten teachers understand the prior learning environments and experiences of children coming into their classrooms; conversely, ELPs learned about what teachers expect children to be able to know and do at the start of school. Having this knowledge helps these professionals to build more effective, coordinated learning experiences for children.



¹ Schulting, A. B., Malone, P. S., & Dodge, K. A. (2005). The effect of school-based kindergarten transition policies and practices on child academic outcomes. *Developmental psychology*, 41(6), 860.

² The full KRPI outcomes report can be found here: <https://www.pdx.edu/ccf/sites/www.pdx.edu/ccf/files/2018%20KRPI%20Outcomes%20Report.pdf>

³ Schulting, A. B., Malone, P. S., & Dodge, K. A. (2005). The effect of school-based kindergarten transition policies and practices on child academic outcomes. *Developmental psychology*, 41(6), 860.

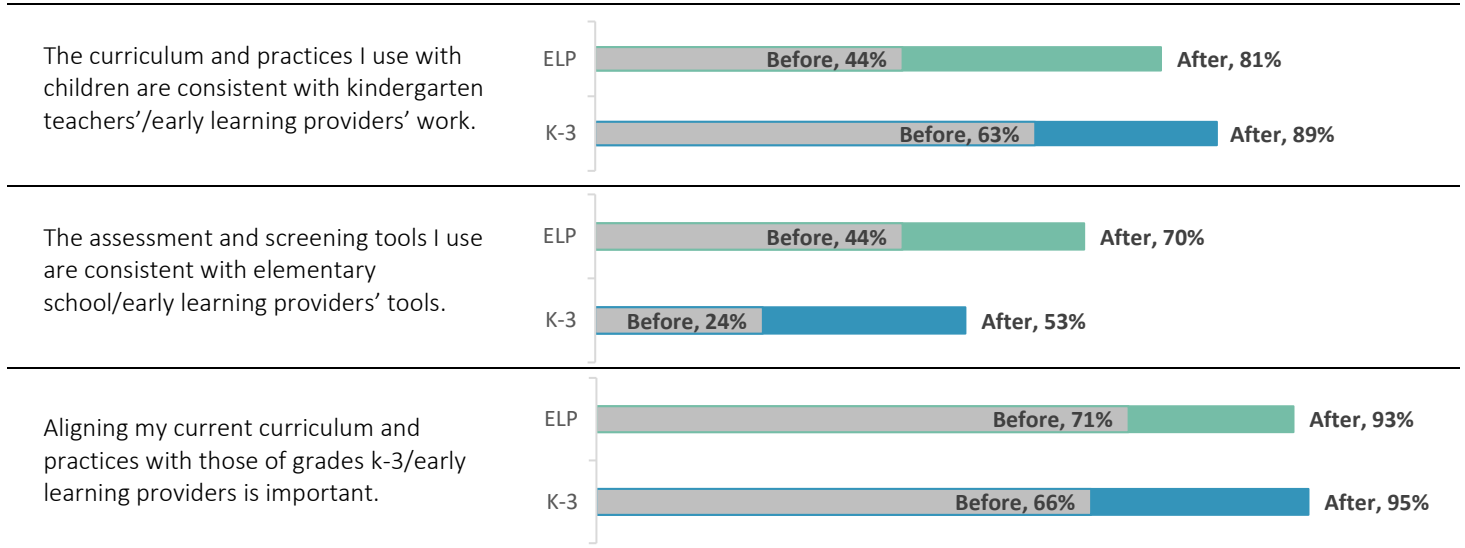
Shared PD Creates an Intentional Pathway from Early Learning to Elementary

When goals, practices, and approach are consistent between children’s early learning/preschool settings and early elementary school, children are more successful in kindergarten and beyond.^{1,3}

KRPI Research Findings

Shared professional development lays the foundation for an intentional pathway between early childhood programs and kindergarten by supporting alignment of expectations, curriculum, and screening and assessment tools.

(% agree/strongly agree)



After participating in a shared PD event, most participants planned to make changes to increase alignment.

Shared PD Elevates the Importance of Social Emotional Learning

Research shows that one of the biggest challenges for kindergarten teachers is helping children learn the social and emotional skills they need to have positive learning experiences in the classroom. While this is often a primary focus for early learning and preschool providers, kindergarten teachers want more support in promoting children’s social development, and many want to learn more about how and why it is important.⁴

KRPI Research Finding

Shared professional development provided by KRPI helps K-3 teachers understand the importance of social emotional learning for children’s academic success.



The Essential Supports for Successful Shared PD

KRPI Research Findings

Providing effective opportunities for early learning providers and kindergarten teachers requires time, energy, and commitment. Leadership support and key resources, such as **classroom coverage** and **flexible scheduling**, are essential for teachers to participate in these important shared professional development opportunities.

⁴ Rimm-Kaufman, S. E., Pianta, R. C., & Cox, M. J. (2000). Teachers’ judgments of problems in the transition to kindergarten. *Early childhood research quarterly*, 15(2), 147-166.