Early Childhood Council’s Strategic Plan

*Working together for young children and their families: Increasing our collective impact through collaboration*
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The Early Childhood Council at Portland State University

Vision
The Early Childhood Council at PSU is the region’s leader in interdisciplinary and innovative community partnerships creating opportunities for professional development, research, advocacy, and services to children and families.

Mission Statement
The Early Childhood Council provides leadership, through collaboration, engagement, and communication, to prioritize the interdisciplinary expertise needed to promote the holistic nature of early childhood within the metropolitan area and beyond. Given the dynamic and complex nature of early childhood, we recognize the strong collective impact of interdisciplinary supports and community voice, such as: family support; special needs and early intervention; health, mental health and nutrition; and, early care and education.

STRATEGIC GOALS

GOAL ONE
Improve Communication: Establish Early Childhood Web Platform
- Recognize and Incorporate Information about Graduate and Undergraduate Educational Programs in Early Childhood into the Coordinated PSU Message about Early Childhood

GOAL TWO
Grow Research: Focus on Interdisciplinary Collaboration

GOAL THREE
Create Networks: Share and Extend our Partnerships for Professional Development throughout the Pacific Northwest and beyond

GOAL FOUR
Think Bigger: Bridge Research, Communication, and Professional Development to Inform Policy at the local, regional, state and national levels
Who is the Early Childhood Council?

The PSU Early Childhood Council is comprised of three members appointed by the Provost representing the following three schools/colleges: Graduate School of Education; College of Liberal Arts and Sciences; and School of Social Work. The EC Council assess and prioritize the recommendations set forth in the EC Task Force report to the deans of CLAS, GSE, and SSW and the Provost on the development of implementation/action plans.

- Christine Chaillé, Ph.D. - Chair of the Council, Graduate School of Education, Chair, Curriculum and Instruction
- Amy Donaldson, Ph.D., CCC-SLP - Member, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences
- Jana Meinhold, Ph.D. - Member, School of Social Work, Child and Family Studies
- Ingrid Anderson, Ed. D. - ECC Staff Support

Early Childhood Steering Group
Radiating out from the EC Council is the EC Steering Group. The Steering Group is comprised of a larger representation of faculty, practitioners, and researchers from both the community and PSU. The Steering Group provides support to the strategic work of the EC Council and meets quarterly.

The Larger Early Childhood Community
Radiating out from the EC Council and Steering Group is the broader early childhood presence in Oregon. A web-based platform is being designed to engage this wider community. The website is accessible to all members of the early childhood community, such as agencies from early childhood education, health, well-being, mental health, early intervention, K-12, and the broader community. The website is design to attract researchers, policy makers, educators, practitioners, and others.
Why Early Childhood Now?

Early childhood—the time from birth through eight years of age—is seeing more media attention than ever before. From the White House to Oregon’s State Capitol, billions of dollars are being spent for research and services for children and families.

Early childhood is recognized as a top priority for our future. As President Obama recently stated, “We know that right now during the first three years of life, a child born into a low-income family hears 30 million fewer words than a child born into a well-off family. By giving more of our kids access to high-quality pre-school and other early learning programs, and by helping parents get the tools they need to help their kids succeed, we can give those kids a better shot at the career they are capable of, and a life that will make us all better off. This is one of my top priorities. I want to thank the growing coalition of researchers, non-profits, and foundations who have made it theirs. This week, I am challenging even more Americans to join this effort. Let’s find new ways to deliver a world class education to our children, bridge the word gap, and put more young people on path to success” (June 25, 2014, on Bridging the Word Gap).

PSU and our partners embody the knowledge and skills to respond to this challenge and to lead the region in early childhood research, education, training, and professional development. Supporting not only children but also families in navigating and accessing knowledge and the necessary resources to improve quality of life. PSU also plays a role in preparing professionals for work with children and families in programs like Head Start.

Since the early days of the Obama Administration “Head Start has been at the heart of the President’s early learning agenda” (Whitehouse Blog, June 16, 2015). The Obama Administration has worked to more than double the number of infants and toddlers accessing Early Head Start Programs across our nation. With a $1.5 billion increase in funding to Head Start Programs, and an increase of children accessing those programs, the need for high quality teachers and family service professionals will be necessary. PSU is well equipped to support and educate professionals in a number of programs across early childhood (CFS, SW, C&I, GTEP, SPHR, SPED, ect).

In recent years, specific populations in early childhood have been gaining attention with regard to research funding, professional development, and policy focus. For example, during the 2012-2013 school year, 6.4 million children (13% of all public school children) received special education services (https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp). Of note, 60% of these students spent 80% or more of their time in general education classrooms; thus, educators and classroom teams with limited or no specific training in serving children with special needs are encountering these children in their classrooms on a regular basis, speaking to the need for high quality cross-disciplinary professional development opportunities for these educators.
Further, the prevalence of developmental disabilities (DD) was tracked in the US between 1997 and 2008, and then shifted to tracking of specific disabilities (e.g., ADHD, ASD; CDC, 2008). During that time period, the prevalence of DD increased 17.1%. The current prevalence of autism spectrum disorder is 1 in 68 children; 1 in 42 males (CDC, 2014). Children with ASD incur medical costs 4 to 6 times greater than typically developing children (Shimabukuro, Grosse & Rice, 2008) and over the lifetime of an individual with ASD, the societal cost is estimate at $3.2 million plus the additional loss of income for families who reduce work to care for their child (Ganz, 2007).

However, effective early intervention can reduce such costs by 65% (Jarbrink & Knapp, 2001). Intensive early intervention can improve outcomes of some children with ASD (Warren et al, 2011; Maglione et al, 2012). A significant barrier to EI is access to qualified service providers, thus there has been increased focus on pre-professional training (Donaldson, 2015) and low cost alternatives, such as parent coaching models (Carter et al, 2011; Vismara, Colombi & Rogers, 2009).

PSU has already played a significant role in the realm of early intervention, through its pre- and post-professional training of service providers of early intervention and special education, through research related to assessment and intervention for children with special needs and their families, and through advocacy to improve the quality of lives for these individuals and those who support them. We continue to move forward in a concentrated and collective manner to support this population and all affected by issues of early childhood.
Creating Collective Impact in Early Childhood

Our youngest citizens are not reaching their full potential (Cook & Jeng, 2009). Researchers are studying human capital and the impacts of economic productivity, health, risk behaviors and a range of life-course outcomes, linking them to early childhood. What is being found across all academic disciplines is that early childhood matters (Landry, 2005, President Obama’s 2013 State of the Union Address).

What is recognized today—that the issues of achievement gaps, success in school, productivity, responsible citizenship, and social well-being—all go back to supports in the earliest years of life (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2007). Early childhood research has identified the holistic nature of early childhood supports as four-fold: health, mental health and nutrition; family supports; special needs and early intervention; and early childhood care and education (Department of Children and Youth Affairs, 2013). Issues in early childhood education are manifested in specific issues, such as: inequalities in parental time, resources and education; need for high-quality early care and education, including teacher preparation in developmentally appropriate methodologies; system of care wrap-around programs for health and wellness; and early intervention supports to change child and family trajectories, increasing school success (The Economics of Early Childhood Investments, Executive Office of the President of the United States, 2014).

Why Should PSU Prioritize Early Childhood?

PSU already provides leadership on a local, regional, national, and international scale with its comprehensive presence in early childhood (e.g. publications; clinical services; evaluation of state programs; professional development). PSU is now poised to bring together the already impressive resources on campus to address in an innovative and collaborative way the problems and issues facing the youngest of our citizens. The early childhood years are focused on by numerous disciplines with different perspectives and lenses. It is time to bring these perspectives together with a common focus - improving the lives of our youngest citizens.

Early childhood work in Oregon is increasingly moving to a cross-sector framework (Early Learning Council, 2014). The intersection of supports for young children and families is at the heart of the work of PSU, and Portland State University is uniquely placed as Oregon’s only public urban university. Its structure mimics the highly
desirable state structure of being large enough to engage researchers from a broad platform of scholarship, while being nimble enough to build collaboration and respond to change. The opportunities for Portland State to extend its reach into state, regional and national policy, research, and educational leadership is only limited by its ability to create a cross-sector framework within the university that mirrors funders and state and national models.

Over the last 20 years, PSU has increasingly grown the scope and impact of its portfolio of activities related to young children and families. Early childhood is threaded through the Graduate School of Education, the School of Social Work, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the College of Urban and Public Affairs and Enrollment Management and Student Affairs, with over 100 programs, projects, and activities identified across the campus. Through the specialized, focused domains of these five schools, colleges and units, PSU is currently serving the community, city, state and region in early childhood. PSU’s newly formed Early Childhood Council, which advises the Provost, is tasked with the development of a PSU ‘front door’ for early childhood, one which will lay the foundations for PSU’s interdisciplinary vision of early childhood for the future. Portland State has taken a unique and needed viewpoint on early childhood, addressing the holistic nature of early childhood and all four identified support areas.

**Five Trends in Early Childhood and PSU’s Ability to Lead**

PSU is well situated to lead early childhood at a community, state, regional, and national level. Below are examples of some of PSU’s current work.

1. There is national recognition that child development largely reflects western ideals and requires a broader approach to account for cultural variation (NAEYC, 2009; Powers, 2015). One of the commitments of the Early Childhood Council would be to support research, programs, professional development, and services that support the intersection of culture, parenting, and child development.
   - As Oregon’s only urban university, PSU is uniquely situated to move the work forward for Oregon. Examples of PSU’s presence include:
     - The School of Social Work’s Regional Research Institute Programs supporting Indigenous infants, children, and families in Oregon.
     - The Graduate School of Education Bilingual Teacher Pathway program, as well as the American Indian Educational Program, partners with communities to grow bi-literate and bi-cultural educators.
     - The Department of Speech & Hearing Sciences’ Bilingual Concentration.

2. The early childhood field has numerous entry points and pathways for training and professional development. National and State efforts have been focused
on developing, enhancing, and implementing strategies and policies to integrate the early childhood professional development system.

- An example of PSU’s presence:
  - The Graduate School of Education’s Oregon Center for Career Development is contracted to support 21,500 individuals working with children in Oregon and houses one of the largest state data systems in the nation for tracking education and professional development that is used in a cross-sector collaborative with the state’s Early learning Division for licensing and the state Quality Rating and Improvement System.

3. There is increasing recognition of disparity and the need to promote equality and mobilize resources for social change through healthy environments, communities and access to services for young children and their families.

- An example of PSU’s presence:
  - Research being conducted through PSU’s College of Urban & Public Affairs, School of Community Health.
  - Research and training conducted in the School of Social Work’s Center for Improvement of Child and Family Services, Regional Research Institute, and the Center for Interdisciplinary Mentoring Research.


- Examples of PSU’s presence include:
  - An undergraduate major in the School of Social Work’s Child and Family Studies Department, which has articulation agreements with 11 of the 15 community colleges that offer early childhood coursework, creating a pipeline for the substantial investments by the Oregon Community Foundation and the State of Oregon in funding AA degrees in early childhood in achieving Oregon’s 40-40-20 goal.
  - A master’s degree with a focus on Early Childhood Education in the Graduate School of Education that serves as a model for innovative constructivist early childhood education, and that works in concert with the Helen Gordon Child Development Center, an internationally known showcase for best practices.

5. Addressing the needs of young children with special needs and their families is a major focus in the field of early childhood across the country. There is increasing need for development screenings and early intervention for children and their families that address the stressors of early childhood and mitigate the factors that place children at risk for poor outcomes.

- Examples of PSU’s presence include:
The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences, providing degrees, clinical services, and research—including the PSU Speech & Language Clinic with special supports for children with a wide range of communication needs.

1. In particular, The PSU SPHR department offers specialized services related to bilingual assessment and intervention to the community. Under the guidance and supervision of licensed faculty with expertise in the area of bilingualism, graduate students conduct screenings, assessments and intervention services for individuals and school districts in the community. The graduate students in the Bilingual Concentration are proficient in Spanish and are able to conduct both treatment and assessments in Spanish.

2. The Graduate School of Education provides programs in early intervention and infant toddler mental health, and a newly approved cross-departmental (Curriculum and Instruction and Special Education) Master’s Program in Early Childhood with a focus on Inclusion and Constructivist Education.

2014-2015 Council Activities and Achievements

The EC Council started its work on the EC Task Force Recommendations after the appointment of its members in Winter 2014. The EC Council rapidly realized that the focus of its first year of work would need to be establishing a ‘FRONT DOOR’ for PSU and the larger community (GOAL 1). This priority echoed the recommendations of the EC Task Force as:

“An easy-to-navigate web portal for Early Childhood work and research is a necessary foundational step to create a high impact EC focus and culture at PSU.”
Early Childhood Front Door: What is it?
The Early Childhood Council brings together PSU’s web platform for early childhood.

A coordinated web presence in early childhood facilitates a common goal of supporting and assisting young children and families and those who work with or on behalf of these groups. When PSU aligns its early childhood presence effectively through the Front Door, PSU will provide a model for integrated university and community systems that will be a showcase for Oregon and the region.

Development of an Interdisciplinary Front Door

The early childhood Front Door will connect expertise at PSU and in the community throughout the region. This portal will serve as platform to foster collaboration and research, highlight ongoing and developing research, bring awareness to community partnerships, grant awards, and experts across early childhood.
The focus of the 2015-2016 Strategic Plan is:

**GOAL TWO: Grow Research: Focus on Interdisciplinary Collaboration**
- Work with RSP to identify and cultivate national research opportunities in early childhood research
- Work with RSP to assess and cultivate national research opportunities in special needs research (young children with disabilities)
- Working with RSP develop and institutionalize mechanism to coordinate applications for federal grants

The Early Childhood Council prioritized Goal One, **Improve Communications**. Starting in January 2015 the Early Childhood Council began building the first early childhood research based platform in Oregon to provide a foundation for its Goals 2-4. The platform is scheduled for completion in August 2015. The 2015-2016 outcomes for the EC Platform include populating the platform with PSU’s early childhood programs, research, and services. Additional stakeholder targets exist for community and state agencies.

The primary focus of the 2015-2016 year is Goal Two, **Grow Research: Focus on Interdisciplinary Collaboration**. With the population of the Portal, new collaborations will become visible and existing collaborations will be strengthened. The Early Childhood Council will continue to address each of the four goals as follows:

**GOAL One: Improve Communications: Establish Early Childhood Web Platform - Front Door**
- Establish an EC “Front Door” for community partners
- Formalize an EC faculty and programmatic inventory by creating a web platform that serves both internal and external audiences
  - One stop shopping for early childhood research and training
Showcases undergraduate and graduate programs across early childhood at PSU

- Establish consistent brand identity for EC work -- consistently communicate and market PSU’s EC capabilities

### 2015-2016 Projected Deliverables

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Goal 1 Improve Communications
1. Established Steering Group - advisory group
2. Pilot EC Front Door
3. Launch EC Front Door and embedded Qualtrics Survey
4. EC PSU and Community complete Qualtrics Survey and are populated on www.pdx.edu/early-childhood website
5. ECC and Steering group meet and determine how to best facilitate collaboration based on Qualtrics results
6. ECC and Steering Group identify funding mechanism and support collaborative proposal development

### GOAL Two: Grow Research: Focus on Interdisciplinary Collaboration

- Work with RSP to identify and cultivate national research opportunities in early childhood research
- Work with RSP to assess and cultivate national research opportunities in special needs research (young children with disabilities)
  - Implementation funding is a new avenue of interdisciplinary funding designated by NIMH, NIDCD, IES, PCORI
- Work with RSP develop and institutionalize mechanism to coordinate applications for federal grants

### 2015-2020 Projected Deliverables

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Goal Two Projected Deliverables
1. Identification of at least 2 funding mechanisms that capitalize on university-community collaborative partnerships
2. Identification, through the EEC portal or other supports, of interdisciplinary partners and ECC facilitation of submission of at least one PSU research stimulus proposal
3. ECC facilitation of submission of at least one major (federal-level) interdisciplinary proposal during 2015-2016 academic year
4. Development of ECC relationships in support of submission of at least four major early childhood proposals from 2015-2020
What ECC needs Moving Forward

Council Staff Structure
Currently, the Early Childhood Council is being supported by a 60% FTE position, housed in the Graduate School of Education. This position, an assistant professor of practice, provides direct support to the Council by completing all preliminary work and research for the Council to act upon. The Council staff provides the leadership of the day-to-day operations and participates on regional and state committees focused in early childhood education.

The ECC is requesting continued funding for council staff to sustain our momentum and the continued achievement of our 2015-2016 goals.

Council Staff Tasks
- Development of all preliminary materials for communication of EC Council Message across media platforms
- Monitors EC trends in policy and funding across state and national platforms
- Communicates with community and state partners on the work of the EC Council
- Serves on regional and State policy committees for Early Childhood
- Tracks and maintains records on PSU’s EC Presence
- Development and maintenance of Google site for EC Council, Steering Group and interested PSU individuals, including Foundation Fund Development contacts in CLAS, GSE, and SSW
- Development and maintenance of PSU’s early childhood website
- Support to Development Directors on early childhood facts
- Day to Day operations of the Council platform and work

Council Stipend Funds
To achieve our goal of interdisciplinary and community partnered research, the ECC requests a budget of $5,000-10,000 for the 2015-2016 academic year to support the building of professional partnerships. This funding will allow the ECC to offer stipends to community partners interested in advising or participating in collaborative projects, will cover travel and parking costs, and hospitality necessary when building collaborative relationships.