



# 2014-2015 Year 5 Executive Summary

## OPEC at a Glance

### Year 5 Program Highlights

**3,183** parents  
participated in  
**335**  
parenting  
education  
series

**1,077** new  
families reached  
with home visits

**7,858** parents  
attended  
**290**  
workshops

**39,506** adults  
and youth  
participated in  
**273**  
family activities

**45,427** parent  
and youth  
contacts made  
through  
parent support  
activities

The Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC) is a multi-year initiative led by The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), The Ford Family Foundation, and Oregon State University (OSU). Financial supporters include the Meyer Memorial Trust, The Collins Foundation, and OCF Donor Advised Funds. The initiative supports expanded access to best practice parenting education programs, with a focus on programs reaching parents of children prenatal to age six, and supports efforts to develop and strengthen regional parenting education “Hubs.” OPEC is unique in its collaborative, foundation-approach in building a statewide infrastructure for parenting education through community-based non-profits and public agencies. The initiative was launched in July 2010. In 2014-2015, there were twelve regional parenting Hubs serving 19 Oregon counties and Siskiyou County, California. During this past year the OPEC initiative also funded ten Small Grant projects in the Portland Metro area to provide evidence-based classes and/or home visiting for specific groups of parents. The OSU evaluation team synthesized overarching lessons and impacts for the program year.

**Quality Programming.** Through the Hubs and Small Grant projects, the OPEC initiative is reaching a significant number of participants through their programming efforts (at left) and having a positive impact on families and communities. Outcomes included:

- expanding evidence-based programming available to new geographic regions
- increasing accessibility for both universal and targeted audiences
- reaching a culturally and socio-economically diverse audience (Approximately 66% of parents indicated using at least one service available to low-income families.)
- improved parenting skills and child outcomes

**Regional Infrastructures.** Hubs increased their organizational capacity to build an infrastructure for parenting education by:

- committing staff FTE to the coordination and leadership for parenting education
- strengthening their advisory groups
- training facilitators
- developing social media tools to reach parents and community members
- leveraging over \$3 million in new funding and in-kind donations

**Collaboration and Coordination.** The capacity of communities to effectively collaborate and coordinate to offer parenting education programs was enhanced by the OPEC initiative. Overall the OPEC initiative has:

- strengthened partnerships to plan, market, and implement programs
- increased community awareness and positive perceptions of parenting education
- increased the number of referrals for parenting education
- improved collaborations and linkages among partners
- enhanced support of parenting education by key community leaders
- decreased fragmentation of services
- maximized limited community resources



## Increasing Positive Parenting Capacity

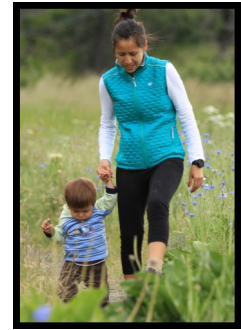
Parenting skills are critical to children’s optimal well-being and development. Research has shown that effective parenting education can strengthen and support families and communities in the prevention of child abuse and neglect, promote protective factors and lead to positive outcomes for both parents and children. Increasing positive parenting capacity among parents is the primary objective of the OPEC initiative. OPEC sites utilize a variety of strategies to engage parents in educational opportunities that lead to improved parenting outcomes including evidence-based parenting education series, workshops, home visits, parent support activities, and family events.

### Programming Numbers 2014-2015

Activity	Description	Hubs	Small Grants	Total
<b>OPEC Parenting Education Series*</b>	Parenting Series Completed	107	41	<b>148</b>
	Parenting Classes	1,142	596	<b>1,738</b>
	Parents Attended	869	513	<b>1,382</b>
	Children/Youth Attended	817	360	<b>1,177</b>
<b>Non-OPEC Parenting Education Series**</b>	Parenting Series Completed	181	6	<b>187</b>
	Parenting Classes	1,971	60	<b>2,031</b>
	Parents Attended	1,724	77	<b>1,801</b>
	Children/Youth Attended	1,416	85	<b>1,501</b>
<b>Parent Workshops</b>	Number of Workshops	275	15	<b>290</b>
	Parents Attended	7,704	154	<b>7,858</b>
	Children/Youth Attended	4,163	130	<b>4,293</b>
<b>Parent Support Activities</b>	Number of Sessions	2,887	217	<b>3,104</b>
	Parents Attended	20,870	371	<b>21,241</b>
	Children/Youth Attended	23,972	214	<b>24,186</b>
<b>Family Activities</b>	Number of Activities	214	59	<b>273</b>
	People Attended	33,922	5,584	<b>39,506</b>
<b>Home Visits</b>	Number of Home Visits	13,696	404	<b>14,100</b>
	Total New Families	997	80	<b>1,077</b>
	Total New Children/Youth	1,172	128	<b>1,300</b>

\*OPEC Parenting Education Series refers to those series that are paid for partially or entirely from OPEC grant funds.

\*\*Non-OPEC Parenting Education Series refers to other series that are not paid for by OPEC grant funds.



### Demographics

of families completing parenting series and workshop evaluations

**Number of Parents: 3,202**  
**Number of Children: 5,632**

#### Gender

**26% Men**  
**65% Women**  
**9% Did not specify**

#### Race/Ethnicity

**63% White/Caucasian**  
**19% Hispanic**  
**2% Black/Afr. American**  
**2% Asian**  
**4% Native American**  
**10% Other/Unspecified**

#### Age of Class Participant

Age Range: **13 to 83**  
Average Age: **35**

#### Parenting Style

**62% with Partner**  
**24% by Themselves**  
**14% did not specify**

#### Children

Average Age: **6**  
Age Range: **0 to 18**  
Age 0-6 Years: **62%**  
Children per Family: **2**

#### Low-Income Resources Utilized by Participants

**35%** receive WIC  
**41%** utilize the Oregon Health Plan  
**24%** receive free or reduced lunches

### Parent Satisfaction

#### Parenting Education Series

**97%** said the series was helpful

**97%** would recommend the series to others



#### Parent Workshops

**98%** found the workshops helpful

**98%** said they would use the information

## Improved Parent and Child Skills

**Hubs and Small Grant sites** are required to administer the Parenting Skills Ladder (PSL), a retrospective pre-post survey, to participants completing a series of parenting education classes or home visits funded by the grant. Many Hub grantees and their partners are also choosing to use the PSL with non-OPEC funded classes. Using the PSL, parents assess their parenting skills before and after participation in a class series. During the past year, parents completing the PSL reported **significant improvement in parenting skills across all items of the survey**. The following table presents aggregate PSL data from 1,741 parents who participated in parenting education through Hub and Small Grant sites.

Parenting Skills	Before Participation	After Participation
Know normal behavior for my child(ren)'s age level	3.1	4.8***
Show my child(ren) love and affection frequently	4.5	5.4***
Listen to my child(ren) to understand their feelings	3.6	5.1***
Help my child(ren) feel good about themselves	3.9	5.2***
Set and stick to reasonable limits and rules	3.3	4.7***
Know fun activities to help my child(ren) learn	3.5	5.0***
Find positive ways to guide and discipline my child(ren)	3.3	5.0***
Play with my child(ren) frequently	3.9	5.0***
Protect my child(ren) from unsafe conditions	4.7	5.5***
Talk with other parents to share experiences	3.0	4.7***
Deal with the day-to-day stresses of parenting	3.2	4.8***
Understand my goals and values as a parent	3.6	5.1***

Note. Rated on a scale of 1-6. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. \*\*\*Significant results indicate parenting skills improved after the parenting education series,  $p < 0.05$ .  $N = 1,741$ .

On the PSL, parents also rated changes in their child's behavior before and after participating in the parent education classes. As reported by their parents, there was **significant improvement in child skills across all items**.

Child Skills	Before Participation	After Participation
Shows concern for others	3.2	4.2***
Willing to follow limits and rules	2.7	3.9***
Gets along with others	3.4	4.4***

Note. Rated on a scale of 1-6. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. \*\*\*Significant results indicate child skills improved after the parenting education series,  $p < 0.05$ .  $N = 1,741$ .



### Quotes from program participants

"I'm more consistent, which makes them more secure."

"I learned so many things that I didn't know before and that has given me more confidence."

"It made me realize what I have to change within myself in order to be a good parent."

"I feel more confident as a mother."

"I play with my son in way that will help him learn. I feel I am a better parent now.."

*"Our family is stronger, happier, and thriving, not struggling."*

"I'm better at setting limits and diffusing challenging situations."

"I've calmed down and become a more gentle parent."

"The classes helped me take a step out of my life to think about how to improve my parenting skills and my life."



## Overall Challenges

Keeping social media updated and current

Offering quality child care

Finding adequate funding to maintain and expand programs

Facilitator turnover at host and/or partner organizations

Lack of follow through by partner agencies for program implementation

Joint OPEC and EL Hubs had challenges in balancing the requirements, governance, and workloads for both initiatives

Difficulties for multi-county Hubs to meet with their advisory groups, build partnerships, and implement programming in all of the counties

## Hubs: Increasing Organizational Capacity

**Staffing.** During the past year, OPEC Hubs used an array of approaches in order to strengthen the capacity of their organizations and communities to implement and sustain parenting education efforts. Ample dedicated FTE is essential to the capacity of organizations for building partnerships, leading coordination efforts, and implementing parenting education programming. Through the OPEC grant, Hubs had an average of .99 FTE devoted to these efforts. Hubs reported that a total of **235 facilitators were trained** in parenting education curricula during the past year using both OPEC funds and partner resources. Hubs further increased their organizational capacity by making **169 sessions of professional development** opportunities accessible to facilitators, enhancing their ability to offer high quality programming.

**Governance.** In addition to paid staff, organizations relied on members of their advisory council or board of directors to assist in determining priorities, meeting their goals and objectives, and providing oversight for fiscal and other management operations. Hubs held a combined total of **177 advisory group meetings** during the past year. Websites and other social media tools were utilized to connect parents and community partners to programming.



**Sustainability.** Recognizing the importance of planning for sustainability, all Hubs received specific technical assistance in this area and were required to develop sustainability plans during the previous program year. During 2014-2015, the Hubs reported their sustainability efforts and that their advisory councils were still actively engaged in sustainability planning and that sub-committees with a focus on strategic funding were still meeting. Most Hubs are using multiple sustainability strategies that have built on their strengths, collaborative relationships, and the changing landscape of funding for early childhood and family services. During the past year, Hubs **leveraged over \$3 million in new funding and in-kind donations.**

### Insights from OPEC Community Partners

In June and July 2015, a total of 29 community partners participated in focus groups and surveys in three Hub regions (Central Oregon, Douglas County, and Siskiyou County). Participants represented a wide range of agencies and organizations. Data from the focus groups and survey indicated that community partners felt that the OPEC initiative:

- Promoted networking and exchange of information among collaboration members
- Brought together organizations who would not have worked together otherwise
- Took active steps to include organizations that are representative of the community
- Generated community awareness of the importance of parenting education
- Shared resources and coordinated efforts to avoid duplication of services
- Expanded parenting education opportunities and increased access for targeted parent populations
- Enhanced the quality of parenting education programs

Partners agreed that the perceptions of parenting education in their community have changed as a result of current program efforts, including a reduced stigma and an increased value associated with parenting education.

**100%**

*agreed that the program is benefiting families*



## Hubs: Increasing Community Collaboration

Collaboration is an essential element in effectively meeting the needs of families and creating positive change within communities. Successful collaboration leads to a shared vision, a common language, and a reduction in the fragmentation of services. A key strategy in the coordination of parenting education programs is to strengthen the capacity of communities to support such programs. This strategy involves building relationships with multiple community partners, effectively marketing positive parenting within the community, improving coordination of community efforts in offering and promoting parenting education, and offering parenting education programs in collaboration with other entities.

**Parent Recruitment.** Hubs used a variety of methods to **recruit parents** to program offerings. Methods included newspaper articles and advertisements, TV announcements, newsletters, radio spots, flyers, and social media outlets such as Facebook. Hubs reported a combined total of **17.5 million potential contacts** with these strategies this year. In addition, Hubs initiated **awareness campaigns** with targeted messages on topics such as child abuse prevention, the importance of parenting, early literacy, and the normalizing of parenting education. These campaigns utilized similar marketing methods and reached over **1.3 million potential contacts**.

**Collaboration.** OPEC programming involves a variety of community organizations that work collaboratively in offering parent education opportunities. Hub partners included Early Learning Hubs, Department of Human Services, Healthy Families, Head Start, Migrant Head Start, Juvenile Department, Educational Service Districts, school systems, health care providers, community action agencies, court and corrections systems, foster parent programs, tribal communities, preschools, child care providers, the faith-based community, relief nurseries, higher education institutions, libraries, service organizations, and other private non-profits. These partners contribute to the Hub initiative in a variety of ways including marketing, referral of parents, financial support, and provision of other resources such as facility use, food, child care, and transportation.

**Partnerships with Schools.** Working with local schools, preschools, and Head Starts can be an effective way to reach and engage families. Hubs linked their programs with school districts through offering programs in school facilities, announcements and descriptions of parenting education programs in school bulletins and newsletters, and being involved in school events and ongoing activities. As a primary partner, over **2,530 programs or class sessions were held in school facilities** or co-sponsored by schools but held in other facilities.

**Promoting School Readiness.** All Hub sites reported programming efforts to **increase school readiness among young children**. Hubs encouraged parent efforts to increase their children's literacy and other school readiness skills by integrating these topics in parenting education series, workshops, or other parent support activities. In addition, Hubs offered or participated in workshops, parent-child interaction groups, or family activities focused on school readiness or transition to kindergarten. Hubs also partnered with elementary schools and early childhood providers to offer kindergarten transition activities.



### Lessons Learned by OPEC Hubs

- ◆ Listen and learn from community partners and parents
- ◆ Build and nurture a solid Infrastructure
- ◆ Seek opportunities to blend, braid, and bundle resources for sustainability
- ◆ Be patient
- ◆ Invest in community partnerships
- ◆ Be resilient in times of change
- ◆ Increase the visibility of your program to decrease the stigma associated with participation
- ◆ Evaluate programming efforts to ensure quality and growth
- ◆ Provide quality child care