



2016-2017 Year 7 Executive Summary

OPEC at a Glance

Year 7 Program Highlights

2,721 parents
participated in
329
parenting
education
series

1,474 new
families reached
with home visits

7,301 parents
attended
315
workshops

28,815 adults
and youth
participated in
210
family activities

45,478 parent
and youth
contacts made
through
parent support
activities

The Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC) is a multi-year initiative supported by The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), The Ford Family Foundation, the Meyer Memorial Trust, and The Collins Foundation in partnership with Oregon State University. In addition to these four foundation partners, funding for the initiative has been provided by OCF Donor Advised Funds and a private donor. OPEC supports expanded access to best practice parenting education programs, with a focus on programs reaching parents of children prenatal to age six (although OPEC grantees serve families with children of all ages), as well as efforts to develop and strengthen regional parenting education “Hubs.” OPEC is unique in its collaborative, foundation-led 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 2016-2017, there were 15 regional parenting Hubs serving 29 Oregon counties and Siskiyou County, California. In addition, the initiative also provided the first of a possible three years of funding for nine Programming Grant projects aimed at providing evidence-based parenting education classes and/or home visiting for specific groups of underserved parents in regions without a Hub as well as projects focused on expanding collaboration with healthcare partners. The OSU evaluation team synthesized the following overarching lessons and impacts for the program year.

Quality Programming. Through the 2016-2017 Hubs and Programming Grant projects, the OPEC initiative reached a significant number of participants through programming (at left) and demonstrated a positive impact on families and communities. Outcomes included:

- expanding access to evidence-based programming to new geographic regions
- increasing accessibility of parenting education for universal and targeted audiences
- reaching a culturally and socio-economically diverse audience (Approximately 62% of parents indicated using at least one service available to low-income families.)
- improved parenting skills and child outcomes

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

- committing staff FTE to the coordination and leadership of parenting education in their region
- strengthening advisory groups
- training facilitators in evidence-based parenting education curricula
- developing social media tools to reach parents and community members
- leveraging almost \$2.9 million in new funding and in-kind donations this year

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

- strengthened partnerships to plan, market, and implement parenting programs
- increased community awareness and positive perceptions of parenting education
- increased the number of referrals to parenting education programs
- improved collaborations and coordination among partners
- increased availability of culturally-responsive programming
- enhanced support of parenting education by key community leaders
- 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 2016-2017

Activity	Description	Hubs ¹	Programming Grants ²	Total
OPEC Parenting Education Series³	Parenting Series Completed	141	21	162
	Parenting Classes	1,431	213	1,644
	Parents Attended At Least One Class	1,631	316	1,947
	Parents Attended – Average	1,063	190	1,253
	Parents Attended 70% or More	976	180	1,156
	Children/Youth Attended	1,200	166	1,366
	Contact Opportunities (parents & youth)	23,276	3,548	26,824
Non-OPEC Parenting Education Series⁴	Parenting Series Completed	167	0	167
	Parenting Classes	1,684	0	1,684
	Parents Attended At Least One Class	2,167	0	2,167
	Parents Attended – Average	1,468	0	1,468
	Parents Attended 70% or More	1,393	0	1,393
	Children/Youth Attended	1,343	0	1,343
	Contact Opportunities (parents & youth)	28,601	0	28,601
Parent Workshops	Number of Workshops	302	13	315
	Parents Attended	7,178	123	7,301
	Children/Youth Attended	3,179	127	3,306
Parent Support Activities	Number of Sessions	2,878	13	2,911
	Parents Attended	20,992	54	21,046
	Children/Youth Attended	24,351	81	24,432
Home Visits	Number of Home Visits	17,322	867	18,189
	Total New Families	1,410	64	1,474
	Total New Children/Youth	1,677	89	1,766
Family Activities	Number of Activities	187	23	210
	People Attended	26,650	2,165	28,815

¹Hub total does not include programs funded with Programming Grant funding.

²Programming specifically funded by Programming Grant funds.

³OPEC Parenting Education Series refers to those series that are paid for partially or entirely from OPEC grant funds.

⁴Non-OPEC Parenting Education Series refers to other series supported by grantees that are not paid for by OPEC grant funds.



Demographics of Families Completing Evaluations for Parenting Series and Workshops

Number of Parents: 2,856

Number of Children: 5,620

Gender

22% Men

71% Women

7% Did not specify

Race/Ethnicity

61% White/Caucasian

2% Black/African American

25% Hispanic/Latino

1% Asian/Pacific Islander

2% Native American

9% Other/Unspecified

Age

Age Range: **12-87**

Average Age: **36**

Parenting Style

64% With Partner

21% By Themselves

15% Did not specify

Children

Average Age: **6**

Age Range: **0-18**

Age 0-6 Years: **62%**

Children per Family: **2**

Low-Income Resources

36% received WIC

45% used the Oregon Health Plan

27% received free or reduced lunches

27% received SNAP/TANF

Improved Parent and Child Skills

Hubs and Programming 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 also choose 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 1,479 parents who participated in parenting education through Hub and Programming Grant sites during 2016-2017.

Parenting Skills	Before Participation	After Participation
Know normal behavior for my child(ren)'s age level	3.3	5.0***
Show my child(ren) love and affection frequently	4.7	5.5***
Listen to my child(ren) to understand their feelings	3.8	5.2***
Help my child(ren) feel good about themselves	4.1	5.3***
Set and stick to reasonable limits and rules	3.4	4.9***
Know fun activities to help my child(ren) learn	3.7	5.1***
Find positive ways to guide and discipline my child(ren)	3.5	5.1***
Play with my child(ren) frequently	4.1	5.1***
Protect my child(ren) from unsafe conditions	4.9	5.6***
Talk with other parents to share experiences	3.3	5.0***
Deal with the day-to-day stresses of parenting	3.3	4.9***
Understand my goals and values as a parent	3.8	5.3***

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, $p < 0.05$. $N = 1,479$.

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	3.6	4.7***
Willing to follow limits and rules	3.2	4.5***
Gets along with others	4.0	4.9***

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, $p < 0.05$. $N = 1,479$.



Quotes from program participants

"I want my family to be the best it can be."

"I like finding common ground with other parents, and learning what is normal development and behavior."

"I feel we have better communication and ultimately a better relationship."

"I learned to love and raise a child."

"I have slowed down to respond rather than reacting and feeling out of control."

"I remind myself regularly of the tools I've learned and apply them. My parenting has totally changed."

"My children understand that I'm trying to learn how to be a better parent and help them be good kids."

"What we have learned has helped in the children dealing with their behavior."

"My children are more aware of their feelings. They are more empathetic of others' feelings."

"My child loved attending and playing with the other children."

Parent Satisfaction

Parenting Education Series

97% said the series was helpful

98% would recommend the series to others



Parent Workshops

98% found the workshops helpful

98% said they would use the information



Overall Challenges

Finding adequate funding to support the growing need for parenting education

Effectively supporting families in rural areas and from diverse linguistic and cultural communities

Recruitment and retention of families for parenting education series

Keeping online information and social media current

Staffing part-time positions, including parenting education facilitators and child care providers

Limited time and resources to focus on normalizing parenting education, innovation, and marketing

Limited access to professional development opportunities

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. Hubs reported that a total of **297 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 **176 sessions of professional development** opportunities accessible to facilitators, enhancing their ability to offer high quality programming. In addition, Hub staff offered or co-sponsored 164 training sessions for other early childhood professionals and partners in their region.

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 **283 advisory meetings** during the past year. Websites and other social media tools were utilized to connect parents and community partners to programming.



Sustainability. During 2016-2017, the Hubs reported their sustainability efforts via the online reporting system and staff interviews. Hubs reported that their advisory councils were 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 almost \$2.9 million in new funding and in-kind donations**.

Insights from OPEC Community Partners

In summer 2017, a total of 27 community partners participated in focus groups and surveys in three Hub and Programming Grant regions (Coos/Curry Hub, Jackson/Josephine Hub, and Youth Contact). Participants represented a wide range of agencies and organizations. Data from the focus groups and surveys 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 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 **14.2 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, and the normalizing of parenting education. These campaigns utilized similar marketing methods and reached over **1 million potential contacts**.

Collaboration. OPEC programming involves a variety of community organizations that work collaboratively in offering parent education opportunities. Hubs reporting collaborating with many different partners including: child care providers, including Head Start and Migrant Head Start; Early Learning Hubs; Healthy Families; relief nurseries; Education Service Districts (ESDs); public schools; higher education institutions; Department of Human Services (DHS); community action agencies; faith-based communities and organizations; health care providers, including Coordinated Care Organizations (CCOs); libraries; court and corrections systems, including juvenile departments; tribal communities; and other community non-profit organizations (e.g., Boys and Girls Club, Family Resource Centers, YMCAs, museums, culturally-specific organizations).

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, putting 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 **2,864 programs or class sessions were held in school facilities** or co-sponsored by schools but held in other facilities.

Supporting School Readiness through Parenting Education. Hubs supported parents' ability to prepare children for kindergarten through parenting education and positive parent-child interactions as well as activities specifically designed to enhance the home learning environment and to build relationships between families and schools. Hubs encouraged parent efforts to increase their children's early literacy skills 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 the transition to kindergarten. Hubs also partnered with elementary schools and early childhood providers to offer kindergarten transition activities.



Lessons Learned by OPEC Hubs

Strong, positive relationships with community partners are critical for sustainability

Working with new partners (Coordinated Care Organizations, Early Learning Hubs, Department of Human Services, community corrections) strengthens community efforts

Normalizing parenting education takes time and creative efforts, including marketing, social media, community partnerships, and word of mouth

Coordination and support is critical at local and regional levels to effectively meet community needs

It is important to celebrate all successes—large and small

