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 2013-2014, 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 $2.2 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

OPEC at a Glance
Year 4
Program Highlights
2,941 parents participated in 325 parenting education series

1,052 new families reached with home visits

6,303 parents attended 264 workshops

32,476 adults and youth participated in 280 family activities

32,643 parent and youth contacts made through parent support activities
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.

Demographics of families completing parenting series and workshop evaluations

Number of Parents: 3,484  
Number of Children: 6,208

Gender
26% Men  
67% Women  
7% Did not specify

Race/Ethnicity
57% White/Caucasian  
23% Hispanic  
5% Asian  
4% Native American  
9% Other/Unspecified

Age of Class Participant
Age Range: 14 to 87  
Average Age: 35

Parenting Style
63% with Partner  
24% by Themselves  
13% did not specify

Children
Average Age: 6  
Age Range: 0 to 18  
Age 0-6 Years: 58%  
Children per Family: 2

Low-Income Resources Utilized by Participants
40% receive WIC  
46% utilize the Oregon Health Plan  
32% receive free or reduced lunches

Parenting Education Series

Parenting Series Completed  
Parenting Classes  
Parents Attended  
Children/Youth Attended

Parent Workshops

Number of Workshops  
Parents Attended  
Children/Youth Attended

Parent Support Activities

Number of Sessions  
Parents Attended  
Children/Youth Attended

Family Activities

Number of Activities  
People Attended

Home Visits

Number of Home Visits  
Total New Families  
Total New Children/Youth

Programming Numbers 2013-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Hubs</th>
<th>Small Grants</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OPEC Parenting Education Series*</td>
<td>Parenting Series Completed</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parenting Classes</td>
<td>1,227</td>
<td>551</td>
<td>1,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents Attended</td>
<td>959</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>1,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children/Youth Attended</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>1,041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-OPEC Parenting Education Series**</td>
<td>Parenting Series Completed</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parenting Classes</td>
<td>1,579</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1,659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents Attended</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>1,549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children/Youth Attended</td>
<td>1,328</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Workshops</td>
<td>Number of Workshops</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents Attended</td>
<td>6,005</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>6,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children/Youth Attended</td>
<td>1,910</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>2,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Support Activities</td>
<td>Number of Sessions</td>
<td>3,118</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>3,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parents Attended</td>
<td>15,463</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>15,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children/Youth Attended</td>
<td>16,640</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>16,827</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Activities</td>
<td>Number of Activities</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>People Attended</td>
<td>29,804</td>
<td>2,672</td>
<td>32,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Visits</td>
<td>Number of Home Visits</td>
<td>13,813</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>14,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total New Families</td>
<td>961</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>1,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total New Children/Youth</td>
<td>1,218</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>1,381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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. 

Parent Satisfaction

Parenting Education Series  
97% said the series was helpful  
97% would recommend the series to others

Parent Workshops  
96% found the workshops helpful  
97% 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 1,731 parents who participated in parenting education through Hub and Small Grant sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parenting Skills</th>
<th>Before Participation</th>
<th>After Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know normal behavior for my child(ren)'s age level</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.8***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show my child(ren) love and affection frequently</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>5.4***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen to my child(ren) to understand their feelings</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.0***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help my child(ren) feel good about themselves</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.1***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set and stick to reasonable limits and rules</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.7***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know fun activities to help my child(ren) learn</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.9***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find positive ways to guide and discipline my child(ren)</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>5.9***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play with my child(ren) frequently</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protect my child(ren) from unsafe conditions</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.5***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk with other parents to share experiences</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.8***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deal with the day-to-day stresses of parenting</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.7***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand my goals and values as a parent</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.1***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 = 1,731.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Skills</th>
<th>Before Participation</th>
<th>After Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shows concern for others</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>4.2***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to follow limits and rules</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.9***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gets along with others</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.4***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 = 1,731.

Additional analysis was conducted to determine whether the impact of parenting education varied as a function of parents’ demographic characteristics or the type of parenting education curriculum. The analysis revealed that there were greater gains for some audiences. Low-income parents reported somewhat greater gains in both parenting and child skills than non-low-income parents. Minority parents reported greater gains in parenting and child skills than Caucasian parents. In addition, parents who attended evidence-based parenting education series reported greater gains than parents who attended non-evidence-based series.

Quotes from program participants

“I feel more confident in my parenting skills.”

“This class has made me a better parent, [which is] creating a better and easier life for my child.”

“I have a better understanding of where my son is for his age and how to support his development.”

“I have more confidence.”

“I learned about discipline, not spanking.”

“It has helped me to build a network of support with other moms.”

“I feel that I am more aware of ways to communicate with my kids...there is a lot less anger in the home.”

“I have more patience and understand that most of my child’s behavior is normal.”

“[I] learned how to better interact with my child in a supportive way that builds confidence and social skills.”
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 fortifying the capacity of organizations for building partnerships, leading coordination efforts, and implementing parenting education programming. Through the OPEC grant, Hubs had an average of 1.08 FTE devoted to these efforts. Hubs reported that a total of 242 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 173 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 163 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 2013-2014, 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 $2.2 million in new funding and in-kind donations.

Insights from OPEC Community Partners

In May and June 2014, a total of 26 community partners participated in focus groups and surveys in three Cohort 2 Hub regions. 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 people and 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.
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 22 million potential contacts with these strategies this year, doubling the number reported during the previous 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 17 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 1,600 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

♦ Seek the input of multiple partners
♦ Invest in community partnerships
♦ Be resilient in times of change
♦ Increase the visibility of your program to decrease the stigma associated with participation
♦ It takes time to build and strengthen community infrastructure takes time
♦ Evaluate programming efforts to ensure quality and growth
♦ Provide quality child care