

OPEC 10-Year Cumulative Summary

2010-2020

Launched in July 2010, 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 of the initiative include OCF, The Ford Family Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, The Collins Foundation, and OCF Donor Advised Funds.

The initiative's partners believe that parents are their children's first and most important teachers, and that investment in strong parenting is a critical strategy for ensuring that all children are ready to learn. The initiative's vision is a stronger statewide system of programs, information, and support for parents with children of all ages. Through grants and technical assistance, the initiative supports expanded access to best practice parenting education 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-led model of building a statewide infrastructure for parenting education through community-based organizations. There are no similar prototypes in the nation. The mission, vision, and goals of the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative are:

Mission

The mission of the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative is to support delivery of high quality parenting education programs and to support collaborative efforts to strengthen regional parenting education systems through coordination and planning.

Vision

All Oregon parents will have access to high quality, proven parenting education programs that support them in their critical role as their children's first and most important teachers; all Oregon communities will be served by a network of strong parenting programs and a regional parenting education "Hub;" and Oregon will be a national leader in professionalizing and normalizing parenting education.

Goals

- To increase parent knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to support positive parent-child relationships, effective parenting behavior, and optimal child development
- To expand access for parents to high quality parenting education programs by increasing organizational capacity to offer parenting education programs
- To increase Hub communities' capacity and ownership for family-focused programming

Organizations receiving OPEC Hub funding were selected by their community partners through a collaborative process to coordinate parenting education activities for their region. The Hub organizations work with private and public partners in their region to provide universal parenting education and build a coordinated network of parenting education programs for parents of children of all ages, with OPEC funds specifically designated to support programs for parents of children prenatal to age six. Hub organizations are expected to promote a spirit of collaboration among all regional stakeholders while serving as a point of coordination for planning, information, and activities related to parenting education. Hubs also deliver evidence-based parenting education programs (directly or through subcontracts or “mini-grants”).

OPEC has funded regional parenting Hubs through a phased process over the course of the nine years of the initiative. In July 2010, OPEC began its first round of funding for six regional parenting Hubs. In July 2011, six additional Hubs were funded. In July 2014, the initiative continued to grow by funding three new Hubs and expanding the geographical reach of three existing Hubs to serve additional counties. Two communities received planning grants in 2014 and from these planning grants, two new Hubs were established in July 2015. Hub funding also ended in 2015 for two of the previous Hubs. One of these Hubs (established in 2014) decided it did not have the infrastructure to adequately support a parenting education Hub and elected not to continue with its OPEC funding. Whereas the OPEC grant for the other Hub (established in 2011) was not renewed for a fifth year. In July 2016, two existing Hubs expanded their geographical reach to include three new counties. In July 2017, one Hub expanded to include three counties previously covered by a former Hub. In July 2019, one new Hub was established serving two counties and an additional Hub expanded to serve a neighboring county. At the time of this report, there are a total of 16 OPEC Hubs providing parenting education in 35 of 36 Oregon counties plus Siskiyou County, California.

In addition to Hubs, OPEC has funded several rounds of Small and Programming Grant projects over the past nine years. The purpose of the first two rounds of the Small Grant program (2010-2016) was to support expansion of access to, or enhancement of, proven programs to increase parent and family member understanding of the learning and development of young children through group classes and/or home visiting. Each round of Small Grants provided three years of funding. The first round was funded in 2010 and included nine sites across the state. The second round was launched in 2013 and included ten sites in the Portland Metro area that target underserved populations. In 2016-2019, a three-year round of Programming Grants were awarded to nine organizations to expand access to best practice parenting education programs as well as enhance community partnerships, particularly with the healthcare community. Four of the Programming Grants were awarded to non-Hub agencies to support culturally-responsive parenting education programming as well as parenting education programming offered in

healthcare settings. Four of the Programming Grants were awarded to existing Hubs to support collaborative parenting education programming efforts with healthcare partners. In addition, one Hub received a Programming Grant to support evaluation of a community grown, research-based parenting program that encourages parent-child interaction as well as community building.

In this report, the Oregon State University evaluation team synthesizes overarching outcomes for the first ten years of the initiative. Major outcomes indicate that the OPEC initiative is:

Increasing access to quality programming and improving parent and child skills. Through the Hubs and Small/Programming Grant projects, evidence-based parenting education programming has expanded to new geographic regions and has been adopted by many partner agencies. This expansion increased accessibility of parenting education for both universal and targeted audiences. Parenting education programs are reaching a culturally and socio-economically diverse audience. Parents participating in class series report significant improvement in their parenting skills. Parents also reported significant positive changes in their children's behaviors.

Creating regional infrastructures and increasing organizational capacity. OPEC Hubs build and strengthen infrastructures to support parenting education through increased organizational capacity, coordination, and community collaboration. Building a new system not only takes a dedicated lead organization with strong leaders, but also a significant amount of time, a willingness to learn from experiences and technical assistance, the continuous improvement of procedures and programs, and a commitment to fostering relationships.

Increasing community collaboration. Community partners overwhelmingly believe that higher quality, more comprehensive parenting education programs are available to families as a result of the OPEC Initiative. Community partners feel ownership in the initiative and believe that this collaboration improves coordination and community awareness of parenting education and increases positive outcomes for families in their communities.

Hubs and Programming Grants: Increasing Access to Parenting Programs

The primary objective of the OPEC initiative is to expand access to high-quality parenting education programs for families of children prenatal through age six. Over the past ten years, evidence-based parenting education programming has been expanded to new geographic regions through Hubs and Programming Grants, increasing access for both universal and targeted audiences. OPEC sites used a variety of strategies to engage families in parenting education opportunities that lead to improved parenting outcomes, including:

- *OPEC funded parenting education series* are evidence-based and targeted to parents of children ages 0-6. Most series include 7 to 12 weekly classes using a specific curriculum.
- *Non-OPEC parenting education series* are either offered by grantees using other funding or conducted by partner organizations. Non-OPEC series may use evidence or non-evidence-based curricula or focus on older age ranges.
- *Parent workshops* include one-time events covering special topics or guest speaker presentations.
- *Parent support activities* are recurring programs that bring parents together around a common topic or activity in order to create community and support for parents and youth. Parent support activities often include multiple sessions and seek to enhance interactions between parents and children or encourage connections with other parents.
- *Family activities* are one-time social, recreational, or educational events that sites plan, sponsor, and/or facilitate as part of their overall parenting education and outreach goals.
- *Home visitation* provides parenting education information to parents through a one-on-one approach in their own home. Home visitors often follow a set curriculum that can be adapted to the particular needs of the parents. Alternately, some home visitors may support parents in other ways, such as with community resources referral or case management.

Table 1 displays the number of programs and families reached through each type of activity during the ten years of the OPEC initiative.

Table 1

Programming Numbers for Hubs and Programming/Small Grant Projects, 2010-2020

Activity	Description	Hubs ¹	Programming/ Small Grants ²	Total
OPEC Parenting Education Series	Parenting Series Completed	1,233	285	1,518
	Parenting Classes	12,381	3,616	15,997
	Parents Attended	9,777	2,809	12,586
	Children/Youth Attended	8,847	2,521	11,368
Non-OPEC Parenting Education Series	Parenting Series Completed	1,672	79	1,751
	Parenting Classes	16,439	838	17,277
	Parents Attended	15,312	840	16,152
	Children/Youth Attended	12,556	654	13,210

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Table 1 (continued)

Programming Numbers for Hubs and Programming/Small Grant Projects, 2010-2019

Activity	Description	Hubs ¹	Programming /Small Grants ²	Total
Parent Workshops	Number of Workshops	2,593	183	2,776
	Parents Attended	67,387	2,659	70,046
	Children/Youth Attended	31,354	2,312	33,666
Parent Support Activities	Number of Sessions	24,505	2,042	26,547
	Parents Attended	186,080	3,028	189,108
	Children/Youth Attended	207,557	2,844	210,401
Family Activities	Number of Activities	1,826	469	2,295
	People Attended	281,712	30,591	312,303
Home Visits	Number of Home Visits	133,541	9,932	143,473
	Total New Families	10,968	1,034	12,002
	Total New Children/Youth	13,221	1,601	14,822

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

²Small/Programming Grant total includes all programming reported by Small Grant projects from 2010-2016 as well as programming specifically funded by Programming Grant funds in 2016-2019.

Although there are fluctuations among the individual sites, the overall number of parenting education programs implemented and the number of parents participating have increased since the initiative began in 2010. While much of this increase can be attributed to the changes in the number of sites over time (see Figure 1), collectively, the sites continued to contribute to the overall growth and stability of an accessible and sustainable parenting education system.

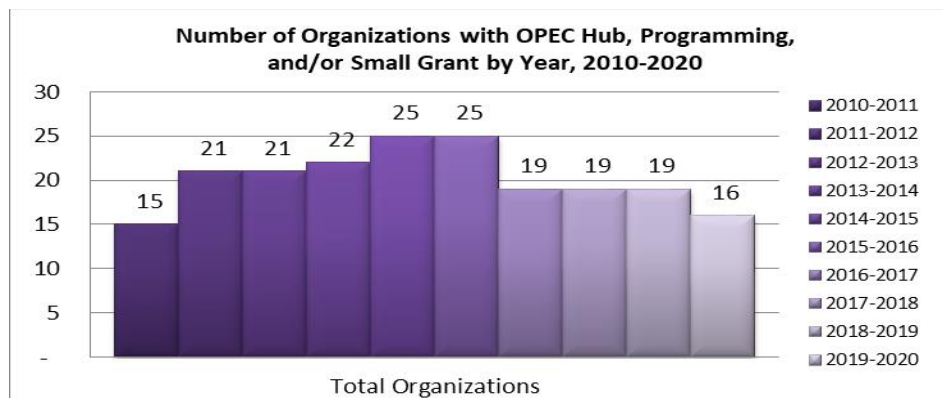


Figure 1

When viewing the number of series and classes over time, it is important to note that Hub funding is administered in a phased process in which Hubs can apply for full funding for three years, followed by step-down funding in the fourth year and beyond. Additionally, if a Hub expands their region (i.e., adds one or more counties to their Hub’s service area), their funding cycle starts over with the opportunity for full funding for an additional three years before step-down funding begins. As of Year 10, Hubs that reach a stepdown level of 50% of their initial OPEC funding have the opportunity to continue receiving funding at that level. It is important to note that although OPEC funding for individual Hubs has decreased over time, all Hubs have obtained funding to support parenting education efforts from other sources. In many cases, these funds have replaced or exceeded initial OPEC funding levels. Although OPEC Hubs are only required to report on programs funded specifically by OPEC, many Hubs also report on programs offered using other funding in their region.

It is also important to note that parenting education programming was significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic during the 2019-2020 year. Starting in March 2020, many of the parenting education programs planned by OPEC Hubs had to be canceled or transition to virtual formats. Even with these challenges, Hubs were still able to provide a higher number of parenting education programs and reach more families relative to the first year of the initiative, even though numbers were lower than the previous reporting year. For an overview of cumulative programming numbers by year, see Appendix 5.

Demographic data from the Parenting Skills Ladder and Parenting Workshop Evaluation surveys provide a description of the families reached through the OPEC initiative. Parents are the target audience for class series and workshops. However, participants may include other community members including school-age students. Table 2 displays the demographic information for parents completing surveys between July 2010 and June 2020 for Hubs and July 2010 to July 2019 for Programming/Small Grants.

Table 2

	Hubs N = 27,067	Programming/Small Grants N = 3,060
Age Range of Participant	11 to 99 years	15 to 84 years
Average Age of Participant	35 years	32 years
Gender	69% Female 24% Male 7% Did Not Specify	70% Female 27% Male 3% Did Not Specify

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Table 2 (continued)

	Hubs N = 27,067	Programming/Small Grants N = 3,060
Race/ethnicity	66% White 20% Hispanic 4% Native American 1% Black/African American 1% Asian 8% Other/Did Not Specify	36% White 38% Hispanic 2% Native American 8% Black/African American 7% Asian 9% Other/Did Not Specify
Parenting Style	63% With a Partner 23% By Self 14% Did Not Specify	65% With a Partner 27% By Self 8% Did Not Specify
Use of Services Designated for Low-Income Households	35% receive WIC 43% use Oregon Health Plan 26% had school-aged children who received free or reduced lunch	47% receive WIC 64% use Oregon Health Plan 34% had school-aged children who received free or reduced lunch
Children		
Age Range of Children	Under 1 to 18 years	Under 1 to 18 years
Average Age of Children	6 years	6 years
Children Ages 0-6	61%	61%
Average Children per Household	1.83 children	2.04 children

Of note, families participating in programs funded by both Hubs and Programming Grants represented a diverse segment of the population, however, these demographics show that organizations using Programming Grant funds were reaching a higher percentage of families from diverse and underrepresented communities than OPEC Hub funds. In addition, the percentage of families accessing one or more services designated for low-income households was higher in the group of families participating in programs funded by Programming/Small Grants than those funded by Hubs.

In 2012-2013, the OSU Evaluation team added an additional data collection field to capture the estimated number of participants who were mandated, referred, or involved with Department of Human Services (DHS), if known by the OPEC site. Over the seven-year period in which these data have been collected, approximately 19% of parents participating in OPEC funded parenting education series were reportedly involved with DHS. This number was lower for programs funded by OPEC Hub funding (18%) in comparison to programs funded by Programming Grant funds (21%).

Hubs and Programming Grants: Improving Parent and Child Skills

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.

Hub and Small/Programming Grant sites are required to administer the Parenting Skills Ladder (PSL), a retrospective pre/post survey, to all participants completing a series of parenting education classes or home visits funded by the grant. Many OPEC grantees and their partners are also choosing to use the PSL with non-OPEC funded classes.

Using the Parenting Skills Ladder, parents assess their parenting skills before and after participation in a class series. Overall, during the past nine years, parents completing the PSL reported significant improvement in parenting skills across all items of the survey. The following tables present aggregate PSL data from 15,158 parents who participated in parenting education series through Hub and Small/Programming Grant sites from 2010-2020.

Table 3

Parenting Skills Before and After Participation

Parenting Skills	Before Participation	After Participation
Know normal behavior for my child(ren)’s age level	3.2	4.9***
Show my child(ren) love and affection frequently	4.7	5.5***
Listen to my child(ren) to understand their feelings	3.7	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	4.0	5.2***
Protect my child(ren) from unsafe conditions	4.9	5.6***
Talk with other parents to share experiences	3.3	4.9***
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. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. ***Significant results indicate child skills improved after the parenting education series, $p < 0.05$. $N = 15,158$.

On the Parenting Skills Ladder, parents also rated changes in their child’s behavior before and after participating in parent education classes. As reported by parents, there was significant improvement in their children’s skills across all items, see Table 4.

Table 4

Child Skills Before and After Participation

Child Skills	Before Participation	After Participation
Shows concern for others	3.6	4.7***
Willing to follow limits and rules	3.1	4.4***
Gets along with others	3.9	4.9***

Note. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. ***Significant results indicate child skills improved after the parenting education series, $p < 0.05$. $N = 15,158$.

From 2010-2019, 28 parent focus groups were facilitated by OSU faculty and graduate students in Hub regions and at Small/Programming Grant project sites. Twenty-one were held in English and seven in Spanish. A total of 241 parents have participated in the focus groups. Analysis of the open-ended questions on the Parenting Skills Ladder and focus group responses supported the quantitative data. Together, they suggested that the vast majority of participants in the programs enjoyed the parenting education programs in which they participated and that they continued to seek out additional opportunities to access similar programs. They shared that they had benefitted from participation both in terms of enhanced parenting skills and strategies as well as improved family dynamics. Qualitative data provided by the parents indicated that they felt more confident in their parenting abilities and were able to take away parenting skills and specific tools to improve communication with their children. They also believed they had a greater knowledge and understanding of child development and age-appropriate behavior, which significantly improved their ability to establish reasonable expectations. Many parents shared that their children enjoyed participating in parenting education child care programs as well. Many Hubs and Programming Grant organizations offered free child care to families participating in parenting education series. Children enjoyed participating in activities, many of which targeted kindergarten readiness or other skills, and socializing with other children.

Parents also attributed changes in their child’s behavior to skills and strategies they gained through participation in parenting education series. Parents reported that their children were positively responding to new parenting and discipline strategies, had fewer tantrums, were more cooperative and better able to get along with others, and were more willing to follow their parents’ guidance. These changes contributed to increased patience with their children as well as less stress overall for families.

Overwhelmingly, parents were satisfied with their parenting education experiences. Of the 14,694 participants completing the satisfaction section of the Parenting Skills Ladder, 97% reported that the information and resources in the class or home visits were somewhat or very helpful. In addition, 97% of the parents responded that they were likely to recommend the classes to others. Of the 14,526 participants completing the satisfaction section of the Parent Workshop Evaluation, 97% of the respondents described the workshop materials as somewhat or very helpful. Additionally, 97% reported that they would use the information or resources presented at the workshop a lot or some of the time.

Hubs: Increasing Organizational Capacity

In addition to implementing parenting education programs for parents of young children, OPEC Hubs are also charged with the responsibility of building an infrastructure for the coordination of programs for parents of children of all ages in their regions. OPEC Hubs used an array of approaches in order to strengthen the capacity of their own organization and the capacity of other organizations in their communities to implement and sustain parenting education efforts. Ample dedicated FTE is essential to strengthening the capacity of Hubs to build partnerships, lead coordination efforts, and implement parenting education programs. As a result of the OPEC grant, all Hubs have designated positions and FTE devoted to parenting education.

Table 5

Organizational Capacity Numbers 2010-2020

Activity	Description	Hubs
Facilitators Trained In Curricula	OPEC Facilitators Trained	1,182
	Non-OPEC Facilitators Trained	1,369
Professional Development	Sessions for Facilitators	1,591
	Sessions for OPEC Staff	2,388
Advisory Meetings	Advisory Board Meetings	2,118
Funds Leveraged	Funds Leveraged	\$23,036,310
	In-Kind Leveraged	\$7,138,931
	Total Leveraged	\$30,175,241

Hubs reported that a total of 3,979 facilitators were trained in parenting education curricula during the past ten years using both OPEC funds and partner resources. Hubs further increased their organizational capacity by making professional development opportunities accessible to facilitators and other professional staff, enhancing their communities' ability to offer high-quality programming, and meeting the needs of families.

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 a degree of oversight for fiscal and other management operations. The advisory councils are diverse in their membership and are representative of the communities being served by the Hubs. Advisory council members have been included in the development of both strategic and sustainability plans for the initiative.

During their first year of funding (and the first year of each expansion), Hubs were required to develop strategic plans to help strengthen their organizations over time and sustain programs financially into the future. Through strategic planning, Hubs collected input from over 8,299 parents and 491 community partners to identify strengths and gaps in parenting education in their Hub regions. These needs assessments helped to determine goals and directions for further development of programs. Hubs continue to use the strategic plans as "road maps" and make updates as needed.

Strategic plans helped to clarify not only priority areas for programming, but also the need for strategies for sustainability. Hubs were required to write sustainability plans during the 2012-2013 program year. Overall, the sustainability plans reflected the Hubs' understanding of the importance of diversified funding streams. As should be expected, there was not one "silver bullet" tactic for sustainability. Rather, most Hubs identified multiple strategies that built on their strengths, collaborative relationships, and the changing landscape of funding for early childhood and family services. Over the past ten years, Hubs leveraged over \$30 million in new funds and in-kind donations.

In an effort to build a system for coordination, sites have developed websites and other social media tools to connect parents and community partners to programming. Hubs view community awareness about their parenting education programs as an important element for sustainability.

Note for Small/Programming Grant Sites related to Organizational Capacity: Although non-Hub Programming Grant sites were not required to report on progress related to organizational capacity, many chose to do so because these efforts are seen as critical for high-quality parenting programming. Over the nine years of Small/Programming Grant funding, sites

reported that they had trained a total of 201 facilitators to use evidence-based parenting education curricula. Programming Grant sites also reported leveraging over \$2.5 million in new funds and in-kind donations to support their program efforts.

Hubs: Increasing Community Collaboration

Effectively meeting the needs of families and creating positive change within communities requires collaboration among organizations that work with parents and children. Successful collaboration can lead to the development of a shared vision, a common language, joint metrics, shared referrals, the capacity to leverage resources and funding, and reduced duplication and fragmentation of services. OPEC Hubs are striving to forge collaborative partnerships with multiple partners and view these partnerships as critical to long-term sustainability of parenting education services.

OPEC programming involves a variety of community organizations that work collaboratively in offering parent education opportunities. Hubs partner with numerous organizations, including schools and school districts, Early Learning Hubs, Healthy Families/Healthy Start, Head Start, Department of Human Services (Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency), Coordinated Care Organizations, juvenile departments, county corrections, county mental health programs, drug and alcohol treatment departments, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, circuit courts, the faith-based community, relief nurseries, private preschools, teen parent programs, local businesses, service organizations, and other non-profits. These partners contribute to the Hub initiative in diverse ways, including marketing, referral of parents, financial support, and provision of other resources such as facility use, food, child care, and transportation.

Working with local schools can be an effective way to reach and engage families. For OPEC reporting purposes, the definition of school includes preschools, Head Starts, and K-12 schools. Hubs connected their programs with school districts through the location of 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. During the ten years of the OPEC initiative, 20,056 programs or class sessions have been held in school facilities with an additional 1,458 programs co-sponsored by schools, but held at other facilities in the community.

Hubs supported parents' ability to prepare their 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 groups, or family activities focused on the transition to kindergarten.

From 2010-2019, a total of 435 community partners provided information about the parenting education collaboration in their Hub regions through an online survey or focus group.

Overwhelmingly, these partners indicate that the OPEC initiative is making a difference in their communities by:

- Promoting networking and exchange of information among collaborating partners
- Bringing together people and organizations who would not have worked together otherwise
- Increasing access to parenting education for targeted parent populations
- Generating community awareness of the importance of parenting education
- Integrating local services and supports through formal agreements
- Sharing leadership among stakeholders
- Coordinating efforts to avoid duplication of services
- Sharing resources to implement parenting programming
- Expanding parenting education opportunities
- Enhancing 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. An impressive 98% of the community partners agreed that the parenting education collaboration is benefiting families.

Hubs used many different methods to recruit parents for participation in parenting education programs. Marketing efforts included newsletters, newspaper articles and ads, radio spots, television announcements, websites, flyers, community bulletin boards, and social media outlets such as Facebook. Many Hubs shared that these efforts played an essential role in spreading awareness of their organization and the services provided; however, word of mouth and a “warm handoff” from others continued to be one of the most effective ways to get families in the door to parenting education class series. Hubs also initiated awareness campaigns with targeted messages on topics such as child abuse prevention, the importance of parenting, and normalizing parenting education.

Lessons Learned

Over the ten years of the OPEC initiative, OPEC Hubs and Programming Grant organizations have shared lessons learned. These lessons learned reflect both successes as well as challenges,

including those that have been overcome and those that are ongoing. Lessons learned shared by OPEC grantees over the last ten years include the following:

- Parenting education is a community need.
- It is important to listen to and learn from families so that programs effectively meet their needs.
- There is significant need for parenting education for families with children of all ages.
- A diverse menu of parenting education programs and resources is required to effectively meet the diverse needs of parents and families.
- Dedicated time is required to effectively market and normalize parenting education programs.
- Supporting parenting education professionals is critical to quality programming.
- Integrating parenting education programming into partner agencies is key to sustainability in communities.
- Securing sustainable funding is an on-going and continuous process.
- From crisis comes creativity and innovation.
- Virtual support is a viable way to support parenting.
- Intentionally and actively embedding an anti-racist perspective into programs and partnerships is overdue.
- Take time to celebrate successes – large and small.

Summary

Results from the last nine years indicate that the OPEC initiative has expanded the availability of high-quality parenting education programs and evidence-based series. These programs are reaching a growing number of parents who are representative of both universal and targeted audiences. Parents and community stakeholders indicate that the initiative has had a positive impact on families. OPEC Hubs continue to strengthen regional infrastructures to support parenting education through increased organizational capacity, coordination, and community collaboration.