

## Preschool Promise – Urgent Need for Support

July 27, 2021

Clackamas County Children, Families and Community Connections (CFCC) Division has been made aware that Clackamas County Preschool Promise (PSP) Providers have yet to receive designated funds from the Oregon Department of Education Early Learning Division (ELD) for Summer Early Learning Programs. The PSP Providers offering Summer Early Learning are all small businesses who are unable to continue programing without receiving their designated funding. The Early Learning Division committed **\$420,525** to PSP Programs in Clackamas County for Summer Early Learning (**July – Sept 2021**). ELD informed PSP providers that grant amendments and available funding would be delayed. However, PSP providers did not expect funding to be delayed almost a full month into summer programming. The ELD has yet to provide a timeline for availability of funds and is aware that their inability to provide funds may lead to PSP programs ceasing summer programming.

**In Clackamas County services may end as soon as Friday, July 30 for 138 low-income children currently receiving full-day preschool through Preschool Promise.** This abrupt closure of services will disrupt children's learning, potentially impact their social-emotional well-being and negatively impact parents who rely on PSP Programs to provide care for their children while they work. Ultimately, this could negatively impact Clackamas County employers who are already struggling to maintain their workforce as they return to normal operations after the lifting of pandemic restrictions. Without summer programming funding, the small business PSP providers will have to lay-off staff. This could impact the availability of preschool and child care services into the future. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have lost 96 child care programs, which means **Clackamas County has permanently lost 18% of its total child care capacity since the pandemic began.** Without immediate financial support, PSP programs will need to close by the end of the month. While Clackamas County is not responsible in any way for this delay in funding for this program, we absolutely want to see if there is any opportunity to bridge funding until the ELD provides contracts and funding.

### Potential Solutions

1. *Short-term Emergency loans.* H3S is willing to provide short-term loans to these providers at no interest until funding from ELD is available at which time they would

reimburse the County. This solution would require very close and timely collaboration with county counsel and finance.

The total bridge loans could be up to **\$420,525**.

We are open to other solutions as well. Any help in resolving this crisis is appreciated. We know that well-supported child-care is an investment in the future – leading to better education outcomes, better health outcomes, stronger communities and a more vibrant economy.