



## State of Child Care in Clackamas County

December 8, 2020

Upon request, the Clackamas County Early Learning Hub is pleased to provide this brief update on how we are striving to meet child care needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Child care programs are currently allowed to operate only if they have applied and received approval as Emergency Child Care (ECC) providers. This restriction has been in place since April, and at that time included restrictions on serving children in stable groupings that were limited to 10 children per room. Many licensed programs chose to close, at least temporarily, as the restrictions made it financially infeasible to operate. In August, ECC rules were changed to allow any families who desired child care to be served. At this time, noting the high amount of vacancies that remained in licensed child care, the state chose not to allow new unlicensed programs to operate as ECCs unless the organization applying could prove there was a lack of child care slots in the community.

To date in Clackamas County there are 26 licensed programs who are not operating and could decide to close permanently. An additional 31 programs that were licensed before the pandemic have closed. All data is current to December 7, 2020.

Total Licensed Providers Operating as ECC: 244  
Total Licensed Providers: 270  
Capacity of Licensed ECC Providers: 4,492  
Vacancies Licensed ECC Providers: 1,270 (72% filled)

In the last year, Early Learning Hubs have experienced some transition in our roles. One such transition was our role with Preschool Promise. Since its inception, the Hubs have selected providers and managed Preschool Promise contracts and programs. Starting July 1, 2020, the Early Learning Division of the Oregon Department of Education assumed those roles. The Hubs were tasked with coordinating enrollment of eligible families into Preschool Promise (PSP) as well as supporting eligible families to access Head Start services. At the same time, the Student Success Act funds were used to expand PSP classrooms around the state for families of three and four year olds with low income (up to 200% FPL). However, all Hubs have struggled filling the slots.

Total Preschool Promise slots in Clackamas County: 173  
# of PSP Programs: 8 (2 school districts, 1 Head Start, 5 licensed small businesses)  
# of PSP Vacancies : 136 (23% filled)  
# of CCCC Head Start Granted Slots: 566 Head Start, 150 Early Head Start  
# of CCCC Vacancies: 142 Head Start, 34 Early Head Start (75% and 77% filled, respectively)  
# of Head Start to Success Granted Slots: 222  
# of Head Start to Success Vacancies: 55 (75% filled)

The current level of vacancies across all types of early childhood programs is unprecedented. We know that many families are choosing not to attend child care or preschool programs at this time, especially as the COVID cases statewide are dramatically increasing, because they are concerned. Additionally, many parents are working from home and have the option of keeping them home. Many providers now provide the option of children participating in preschool virtually. However, this will not help parents that must be physically present at work. We are working on methods to show families the safety precautions in place that are keeping child care safe, such as video tours and explanations. We will also be surveying as many families as possible to gain more insight into parent's reasons for choosing to not enroll in programs.

Please let us know if there is any more information that would be helpful in the Board's deliberations.