

OREGON PARENTING EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

OPEC at a Glance

2,166 parents
participated in
221
parenting
education
series

804 new families
reached with
7,786
home visits

2,538 parents
attended
44
workshops

11,300 adults
and youth
participated in
59
family activities

16,700 parent
and youth
contacts made
through
parent support
activities

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, privately funded, model in building a statewide infrastructure for parenting education through community-based non-profits and public agencies. There are no similar prototypes in the nation. The initiative was launched in May 2010 with six new regional parenting Hubs serving twelve counties, and nine Small Grants to provide evidence-based classes and/or home visiting for specific groups of parents.

The Oregon State University evaluation team used a cluster evaluation method for initiating, conducting, and analyzing information from the six Hub and nine Small Grant sites. The main goal of cluster evaluation is to synthesize overarching lessons and/or impacts from a number of projects within a common initiative. The cluster evaluation for OPEC sites involved multiple methods and used a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and research analysis. Data were collected through an online reporting system, surveys, focus groups, and interviews. Of particular interest was the number of participants reached by the programming efforts as well as the stories of how the programming has made a difference in individual lives. Information was also collected in order to present the strengths, challenges, and progress of the initiative within each site as well as collectively among all of the Hub grantees. **OPEC grantees made significant strides toward achieving their overall goals during the first year of the initiative.**

Hubs increased their organizational capacity to build an infrastructure for parenting education by adding staff positions and increasing FTE, strengthening their advisory groups, and developing strategic plans. **Hubs leveraged \$598,014 in new funding and in-kind donations.**

The capacity of communities to effectively collaborate and coordinate to offer parenting education programs was enhanced. Hubs worked with multiple community partners to market and implement parenting education programs. These collective endeavors were viewed as an effective strategy to combine organizational efforts and maximize limited community resources. Community partners reported that **parenting education programs were better coordinated in their communities** as a result of the Hub initiative.

Through the Hubs and Small Grants evidence-based parenting education programming was **expanded to new geographic regions.** This expansion **increased accessibility** for both universal and targeted audiences. Parents participating in class series reported **significant improvement in their parenting skills.** After parents participated in class series, they reported that **their children showed more concern for others, were more willing to follow limits and rules, and got along better with others.**

Hubs: Increasing Positive Parenting Capacity

Parenting skills are critical to children's optimal well-being and development and can be enhanced by effective parenting education. 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 leading to improved parenting outcomes. These strategies include offering evidence-based parenting educational series, workshops, home visiting, parent support activities, and family events. Hubs made **62,302 contacts** with parents and family members through all parenting activities. (This is an estimation of the total contact opportunities Hub sites reported with parents, youth, and family members during the year.)

During the 2010-2011 year, Hub sites completed a total of 48 OPEC funded evidence-based parenting education series, totaling **495 individual classes**. Of the 495 classes, 428 were in English and 67 were in Spanish. This includes classes in curricula such as: Make Parenting a Pleasure, Incredible Years, Nurturing Parenting, Parenting Now!, and Parenting: The First Three Years. A total of **459 parents** attended OPEC parenting education classes along with 326 children and youth.

The Hub sites also reported a total of **141 non-OPEC funded parenting education series** conducted as part of their regional initiatives, totaling 1,190 parenting individual classes. Of the 1,190 classes, 1,119 were in English and 66 were in Spanish. A total of **1,426 parents** attended non-OPEC funded parenting education series along with 1,197 children and youth.

In addition to parenting education series, Hub sites reported a total of **6,436 home visits**, with 661 new families and 734 new youth. Twenty-nine percent of the families were served through Healthy Start. OPEC directly funded 724 of the home visits. The remaining home visits were done in collaboration with OPEC partners.

Hubs also offered a variety of other family engagement opportunities including workshops, parent support activities, and family activities during 2010-2011. These activities can serve as an opportunity to introduce parents to more intense offerings such as class series. A total of **44 workshops** on parenting relevant topics were hosted by Hub sites with **2,538 parents** and 1,757 youth attending workshops.

Parent support activities are recurring programs that bring parents together around a common topic or activity that creates community and support for parents and youth. Examples include: play groups, parent/child interaction groups, book clubs, public library story time, and booster sessions. The connections made at these support activities can be a key component in recruiting new families to classes and workshops. Hub sites hosted **901 family support sessions**. Approximately **16,700 parent and youth contacts** were made through these support activities.

Family activities are social and informal events that can help parents and children become more comfortable with the facility or program staff. During the first year, Hub sites sponsored a total of **59 family activities**. Approximately **11,300 adults and youth** participated in these family activities. Examples of family activities include Holiday Parties, Family Activity Nights, Family Fun Days, Kid Fairs, Easter Egg Hunts, Stroller Walkoffs, Library Activities and Parent Nights.



Demographics

of Families Served through Parenting Series and Workshops offered by Hubs

Number of Parents: 1,271
Number of Children: 2,320

Gender

22% Men
72% Women
6% Did not specify

Race/Ethnicity

71% White/Caucasian
<1% Black/Afr. American
14% Hispanic
<1% Asian
4% Native American
10% Other/Unspecified

Age

Age Range: **12 to 72**
Average Age: **33**

Parenting Style

61% With Partner
30% By Themselves
9% Did not specify

Children

Average Age: **6**
Age Range: **0 to 18**
Age 0-6 Years: **61%**
Children per Family: **2**

Low-Income Resources Utilized by Hub Participants

41% receive WIC
54% utilize the Oregon Health Plan
32% receive free or reduced lunches

Small Grants: Increasing Positive Parenting Capacity

The Small Grants program funded through The Oregon Community Foundation supports expansion or enhancement of proven programs to increase parent and family member understanding of the learning and development of young children through parenting classes and/or home visiting. The nine funded sites target high-risk parents. Five of the nine programs serve Latino families.

During the 2010-2011 year, OPEC Small Grant sites completed a total of **25 parenting education series**, totaling **321 individual classes**. Of the 321 classes, 142 were in English and 179 were in Spanish. This includes classes in curricula such as: Make Parenting a Pleasure, Nurturing Parenting, and Abriendo Puertas. A total of **224 parents** attended OPEC parenting education classes along with a total of 209 children and youth who attended with their parents. Small Grant sites made a total of **5,998 contacts** through OPEC funded parenting education classes. Although Small Grant sites were not required to report their non-OPEC funded activities, most took advantage of OSU's reporting system to capture their overall efforts toward parenting education. The Small Grants reported conducting a total of 7 non-OPEC funded parenting education series, totaling 81 individual classes. A total of 57 parents attended non-OPEC funded parenting education series along with 34 children and youth.

In addition to class series, Small Grant sites conducted a total of **1,350 home visits**, with 179 new families and 268 new youth. Nine percent of the families were served through Healthy Start. Curricula used during home visits include: Make Parenting a Pleasure, Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, Relief Nursery core curriculum, Partners for a Healthy Baby, Adolescent Parent, Parenting Excellence, and Nurturing Parenting.

Many Small Grants also elected to report on their other programming efforts. During 2010 to 2011, a total of **344 family programs** were offered to parents and families. This included 34 workshops with 358 parents and 213 youth, 229 parent support activities with 388 parents and 331 children, and 81 family activities with 3,314 people attending.



Demographics

of Families Served through Parenting Series and Workshops offered by Small Grants

Number of Parents: 337
Number of Children: 604

Gender

21% Men
75% Women
4% Did not specify

Race/Ethnicity

31% White/Caucasian
6% Black/Afr. American
48% Hispanic
1% Asian
1% Native American
13% Other/Unspecified

Age

Age Range: **16 to 68**
Average Age: **28**

Parenting Style

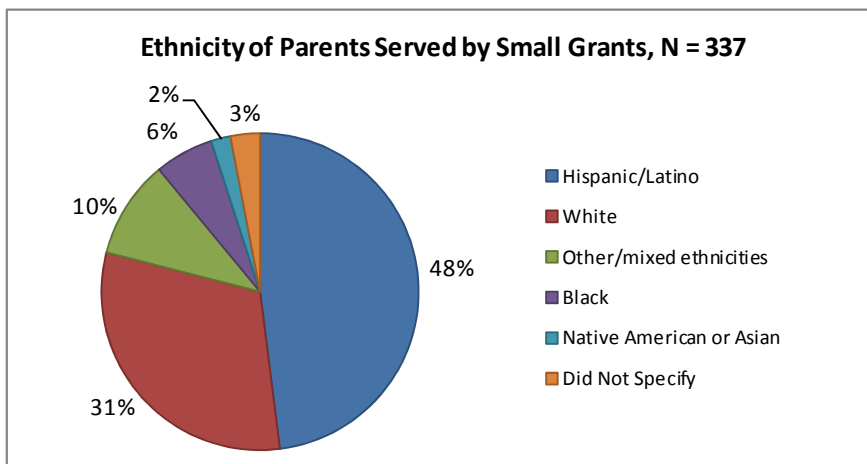
62% With Partner
33% By Themselves
5% Did not specify

Children

Average Age: **5**
Age Range: **0 to 18**
Age 0-6 Years: **71%**
Children per Family: **2**

Low-Income Resources Utilized by Small Grant Participants

64% receive WIC
76% utilize the Oregon Health Plan
34% receive free or reduced lunches



Improved Parent and Child Skills

Hub and Small Grants 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 Parenting Skills Ladder, 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.**

Parenting Skills	Before Participation	After Participation
Know normal behavior for my child(ren)'s age level	3.1	4.7***
Show my child(ren) love and affection frequently	4.6	5.4***
Listen to my child(ren) to understand their feelings	3.6	5.0***
Help my child(ren) feel good about themselves	4.0	5.2***
Set and stick to reasonable limits and rules	3.2	4.7***
Know fun activities to help my child(ren) learn	3.6	5.0***
Find positive ways to guide and discipline my child(ren)	3.4	4.9***
Play with my child(ren) frequently	4.0	5.0***
Protect my child(ren) from unsafe conditions	4.8	5.5***
Talk with other parents to share experiences	3.3	4.8***
Deal with the day-to-day stresses of parenting	3.2	4.6***
Understand my goals and values as a parent	3.7	5.1***

Note. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. ***Significant results indicate parenting skills improved after the parenting education series, $p < 0.05$. $N = 998$.

On the Parenting Skills Ladder, 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	3.4	4.3***
Willing to follow limits and rules	2.9	4.0***
Gets along with others	3.6	4.4***

Note. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. ***Significant results indicate child skills improved after the parenting education series, $p < 0.05$. $N = 998$.



Quotes from program participants

"My child is happier and more confident due to more positive reinforcement."

"Helped me become a better parent. It reduced my stress level and brought more joy into family life."

"She is starting to learn a lot because now I know what she can understand at her age."

"I try harder to be a good Dad."

"I feel more confident as a parent and am more aware of my children's development."

"[I learned] to talk instead of yell or hit."



Overall Challenges

Formalizing functions and protocols within advisory groups

Logistics of expanding into new, often isolated geographic areas

Identifying qualified people to serve as facilitators in remote areas

Leading new partners toward higher quality standards for parenting education programs

Loss of funding and pending reorganization of state agencies impacted Hub efforts

Influx of high risk parents into Hub programs strained programming capacity

Hubs: Increasing Organizational Capacity

During the first 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. An essential element to fortifying the capacity of organizations is having ample FTE dedicated to the initiative. Through the OPEC grant, all Hubs either **increased the number of positions or the FTE of existing staff members** devoted to the effort. Hubs also reported that a total of **89 facilitators were trained** in parenting education curricula during the first year using both OPEC funds and partner resources. Hubs further increased their organizational capacity by making **70 sessions of professional development** opportunities accessible to facilitators.

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. Hubs held a combined total of **81 advisory group meetings** during the first year.

Hubs were required by the funders to develop strategic plans that would help strengthen their organizations over time and sustain programs financially in the future. Most Hub sites also reported development of sustainability plans that identified potential funding sources and other strategies to obtain funding. During the first year, Hubs **leveraged \$598,014 in new funding and in-kind donations**. Through their strategic planning, Hubs conducted needs assessments to determine goals and directions for further development of programs.



Parent Satisfaction

Parenting Education Series

95% of parents reported that the class was somewhat or very helpful

93% of parents reported that they would recommend the class to others

Parent Workshops

98% of parents reported that the workshop was somewhat or very helpful

99% of parents reported that they would use the information from the workshop

Hubs: Increasing Community Collaboration

Collaboration is an essential element in effectively meeting the needs of families and affecting positive change within communities. Successful collaboration leads to a shared vision, a common language, and a reduction in the fragmentation of services. Collaborative partners share their resources and strengths to build a comprehensive system that can address the unique needs of their community. A key strategy in the coordination of parenting education programs is to strengthen the capacity of communities to support such programs. This strategy involves 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 schools and community partners.

Hubs used a variety of methods to **recruit parents** to program offerings. Methods included newsletters, newspaper articles and ads, radio spots, TV announcements, websites, flyers, community bulletin boards, and social media outlets such as Facebook. Hubs reported a combined total of **2.7 million potential contacts** with these strategies. 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 an estimated **866,374 potential contacts**.

OPEC programming involves a variety of community organizations that work collaboratively in offering parent education opportunities. Partners in collaborative efforts identified by Hubs were school systems, Commissions on Children and Families, Healthy Start, Head Start, Child Welfare, Juvenile Department, County Mental Health, County Drug and Alcohol Treatment, YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Department of Human Services, 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 a variety of ways including marketing, referrals of parents, financial support, and other resources such as facility use, food, childcare, and transportation. As a primary partner, over **900 programs were held in school facilities** with an additional 200 programs co-sponsored by schools but held in other facilities in the community.

During the first year of OPEC, 20 community partners participated in focus groups or surveys conducted by OSU in Hood River/Wasco counties and Coos/Curry counties. These community partners identified the following **advantages of their collaborative relationships** with the OPEC Hubs in their area:

- Broadens their organizational perspective which contributes to the refinement of their organizational vision and practices
- Provides access to broader services
- Increases positive outcomes for clientele and communities
- Creates collective commitment to providing parenting education for families and communities
- Improves coordination and community awareness of parenting education
- Strengthens relationships and networking among community agencies



Community partners feel ownership in the initiative.

“Everybody’s been in on it from the beginning . . . everybody’s had an invested element of caring about parents and understanding the importance of parenting education in our community.”

~Columbia Gorge
Community Partner~

Community partners believe that more comprehensive parenting education programs are available to families.

“Through a broad scope of curriculum offerings the collaboration is able to offer parenting supports from prenatal through high school. The focus is to reach parents at all stages of development and age groups.”

~Coos/Curry
Community Partner~