

Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative Parenting Education Network Project

Key Findings Report: Interviews with Key Informants

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Prepared for:



Here for Oregon. Here for Good.

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Introduction

This research report includes key themes from forty-one interviews conducted with key informants from Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties for the Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative (RAI) Parenting Education Network Project.

This report of the key informant interviews is one component of the research conducted for the Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network project by Dovetailing on behalf of the project sponsors The Oregon Community Foundation, the Portland Children's Levy, and Social Venture Partners Portland.

Other Project research included: (1) meetings and interviews with parenting education providers and stakeholders; (2) two surveys, one for parents (available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese) and one for parenting education providers and stakeholders (available in English); and (3) a literature review to examine what has worked well in other parts of Oregon and across the nation. The research questions developed to guide these research processes can be found in Appendix F.

These interviews were intended to discover insights, perspectives, and information to help:

- Inform the approach for developing one or more parenting education networks or other coordinating approaches in the Metro-Portland area; and
- Inform recommendations for leadership and governance of the parenting education network(s) or coordination approaches.

Key informant interviewing is a method best used to gain detailed input that is not easily accessible elsewhere, may be controversial, and/or is political in nature.

Methodology

Forty-one key informants were identified by Steering Committee and/or Advisory Committee members as community leaders whose perspective and experience are valuable to this project.

Key informants work for non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations or the government, providing direct parenting education services to mainstream or specialized populations such as ethnic communities or teen or incarcerated parents, as well as in more ancillary or connective roles such as: providing professional development for early childhood providers who have influence and/or frequent communication with parents; working with medical professionals to help parents receive the information and referrals they need to better support their children's development; and in the court system where parenting education can be mandated.

Key informants work with parents and families with children across the age spectrum from early childhood to young adult as well as with parents with different geographical considerations (e.g., from urban, suburban, or rural neighborhoods), intensity of service needs (e.g., generalized parenting education versus more intensive services), and ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Perspectives from faith and ethnic communities; health care;

county court; higher education; K-12 education; funders; grantees; and government and non-profit sectors were heard.

Of the 41 key informants who were identified and contacted, input was collected from 37 key informants (36 by way of phone interview, 1 by way of written comments on the interview protocol). This represents a 90.4% capture rate with balanced representation among the three counties.

Interviews took place from early-May through August 2011. Phone interviews were 20- to 75-minutes in length with the majority of them lasting about 30-minutes. After the first week of interviews the consultant team reflected on the insights shared and revised the protocols to delete or modify questions that were not evoking new insights from the key informants and to confine the interviews to 30- to 45-minutes in length. The majority of key informants were interviewed using the protocol shown in Appendix C. The Systems Partners protocol was used with key informants who serve in more ancillary or connective roles to parenting education rather than providing direct services.

Key Findings

I. Overview

Over the course of the interviews, clear themes emerged in regards to:

- Perceived benefits and risks of greater coordination of parenting education;
- Functions that a local or regional network or hub should coordinate across organizations and sectors; and
- Elements that would demonstrate success for a network.

An early prevailing theme expressed by nearly every key informant was that a successful network or hub would balance standardization with flexibility. Key informants understood that while a network is collaborative in nature, it involves some streamlining and prioritization of actions and goals, which they believe, will lead to some form of standardization for the parenting education community. Several key informants expressed a desire for evidence-based programs to be promoted yet almost everyone noted that goal must be balanced by acknowledging the promising and emerging practices that are working effectively with certain populations, especially ethnic and rural populations.

In general, there was strong awareness and frequent mention of two main issues that key informants believe will greatly impact the Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project:

- Governor Kitzhaber's early learning redesign effort; and
- General lack of resources to meet current needs.

These issues colored many responses from key informants. There is a pervasive sense of uncertainty around the anticipated systems change(s) as a result of the Governor's redesign effort. For instance, will the County Commissions stay intact with their existing authority? Be dissolved? Be entirely or partially absorbed into a new early learning council structure? or Co-

exist with a new early learning structure? How will the decision impact the increased coordination of parenting education envisioned by the project sponsors? A couple of key informants also mentioned the uncertainty concerning how related systems like health would *practically* fit within the early learning redesign. Additionally, “systems fatigue” was discussed by a number of key informants in relation to the number of coordination efforts currently happening. There were strong statements about valuing the time of potential parenting education network members as direct service providers and professionals experience the strain of doing more with much less.

Several key informants talked about the competitive nature of organizations in the Metro area both in regards to competition for the same scarce resources and also in regards to being the primary service provider for specific families or populations. A number of key informants mentioned the challenge of funding restrictions on who can be served, how and where. Some informants suggested that part of the network’s role could be helping funders better understand these challenges and how they contribute to service gaps seen in certain areas of the Metro area and among certain hard-to-reach populations.

This uncertainty led to two clear themes:

- Key informants expressed very little tolerance for a new effort or entity that seeks to increase coordination but that does not strategically and intentionally align with existing coordinating efforts and prominently involve organizations that are very successful in delivering services, collaborating, working with diverse players, and providing leadership in child-serving communities; and
- Key informants stated that a critical function of the network convener(s)/leader(s) will be to clearly communicate the value, function, and purpose of the network.

Key informants expressed some willingness to share resources and some indicated that they see a benefit from collective action. Many informants said they are willing to share their expertise working with particular types of parenting education (e.g. more experiential programs versus traditional classroom settings) and with particular populations (e.g. teen parents, cultural communities, incarcerated parents, etc.) However, this must be balanced with the difficulty in seeing value beyond one’s own specific program or curriculum focus. Throughout the interview process, key informants admitted they were having difficulty conceptualizing what a local or regional parenting education network or hub would look like and do and at what intensity level.

With the exception of a few, key informants also struggled to think systemically.

They said this was due to:

- Not understanding what was happening in parenting education outside their program or county and feeling like parenting education was being done in silos;
- Seeing first hand, barriers in working across systems (e.g., courts and parenting education) and struggling to see how their immediate cross-system problems could be solved;
- Uncertainty about the Governor’s early learning redesign effort; and
- Not having a good reference point for what good coordination looks like for parenting education services and/or for the tri-county area (although four or more key informants did mention Eugene’ system of parenting education as a successful collaborative model).

II. Key Themes by Research Categories

As part of the project's request for proposal, the project sponsors outlined some initial research questions. Through meetings with the consultant team, the research questions were revised as shown in Appendix F. These research questions have guided each element of the discovery phase. The key findings from the key informant interviews are organized below by the research questions topic groupings.

A. Strategic Value of Coordination

Key informants were asked to share what they believe are the benefits and risks of coordinating parenting education in the Metro area.

The benefits.

1. Increased provider's ability to access fuller and more accurate information about available services.

Numerous key informants, both providers and non-providers of direct services, expressed a desire to know more about who is doing what in regards to parenting education services. Service providers wanted to know where to refer people who do not meet their program criteria or those who have more specific needs than the services they provide. Non-service providers were interested to know what is available so they can provide information and referral to the parents and families they encounter in settings ranging from health care to social services to the courts.

2. Increased ability to make more effective referrals for more parents.

Key informants believe that increased awareness about what parenting education programs are available will increase their ability to share relevant information and make effective referrals to parents in need of services. However, most indicated that there would need to be some quality control measures to ensure they are referring parents, families, and caregivers to a reputable, quality program that is currently available.

3. Improved access to parenting education for the consumer.

Increased access to services, including provisions for transportation, child care, and food as well as a desire for information to help make a better match between the parent needs and the type and location of parenting education support or service available are two main values that key informants discussed. These are the things that will improve the ability for parents to find the right program in the location that is convenient for them. The current hubs are pursuing this, creating Parenting Resource Guides, web sites and calendars that help to market existing programs and better connect families to the right resource.

4. Increased supply and variety of programs serving diverse populations.

Key informants believe there is a need for a greater choice of curricula and programs to meet the vast and diverse needs of the parent population. Among the stated gaps: Culturally-competent and linguistically-appropriate programs; Approaches for the unique needs of grandparents who are serving in the role of primary caretaker and often serve as

the conduit between the parent and the child; Programs for fathers; Ways to address the holistic needs of incarcerated parents throughout their experience with the corrections system; Creation of a continuum of supports to help parents no matter the intensity of services and supports needed.

5. Reduced duplication and filling in the gaps.

Key informants assumed that with the charge of increased coordination comes some initial work to take inventory of existing services, identify and reduce duplication, and fill gaps in services. Current hubs have highly prioritized filling of some of these gaps.

6. Improved consistency and quality of parenting education practice.

The current hubs interviewed are all in the process of developing ways to improve the consistency of offerings across their regions, which allow more confidence when referring families to peer organizations. Most are doing this through increased focus on evidence-based programs, creation of sample lessons and materials and observational assessment of instruction.

The risks.

7. Perception of duplicating Commission roles

Key informants talked about turf issues in a couple of ways. First, the network's purpose of increasing the coordination of parenting education could be perceived by some as duplicative of the role their County Commission on Children and Families fulfills or perhaps by other organizations or a combination of organizations. Key informants fear that, if this were the case, that there would be some bad feelings from entities who believe they are currently providing the coordination and convening leadership, by local partners who trust and value the work their Commission is doing, and by other stakeholders who do not want to invest their time in another coalition building process.

8. Breadth of ages and range of services will make coordination difficult.

Key informants were told the "Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project uses a broad definition of parenting education that includes the types of information, support, and services that help parents, grandparents and caretakers expand their insights, understanding, attitudes, and acquire knowledge and skills about the development of both parents and of their children and the relationship between them. This includes children and youth of all ages, with a particular focus on families with children from prenatal to six years old."

While key informants appreciated this broad definition, especially because it recognizes grandparents and other caretakers and spans the full age spectrum from early childhood through youth, they also acknowledged that this is a broad focus and wondered how something so broad could be coordinated effectively and successfully to show meaningful results. For many service providers who are experiencing real funding challenges, this was especially a concern.

A number of key informants also said that the community of providers offering parenting education services do not have a common understanding of how to define parenting education and how it differs from early childhood education programs.

9. Lack of sustained capacity will slow momentum.

Current hubs all experience low levels of involvement in the “doing” of the collaborative work. Similarly, all expressed concern that the economic climate puts pressure on partners to feel competitive rather than collaborative at times. Since many key informants indicated it would take at least a 10-15 year funding commitment to see meaningful progress coordinating parenting education in the Metro area, the effort is at risk if long-term funding, dedicated expertise and staff capacity are not secured. There is a cyclical pattern of initiatives that start out strong and within three years lose funding, dedicated staffing, and investment.

10. Risk of focusing on process rather than results.

Key informants (particularly direct service providers) do not want to invest serious time in an “over-processed” effort that they perceive as taking away from their ability to serve their clients. Direct service providers discussed their challenges around doing more with less, making do in a world with scarce resources, and managing increased demand due to more families experiencing hardship in today’s economy.

Yet, key informants do recognize there is value in process work. They accept and in some cases even welcome a certain level of process. The key is finding the right dose in order to be effective in advancing the network’s goals.

11. Without visible short-term success and network nimbleness, long-term commitment will be hard to garner.

To help keep the effort on track and to keep network members motivated, interested, and invested, several key informants discussed the need to show incremental successes. This involves first establishing realistic, agreed upon, and clear goals and indicators for the network, and then clearly communicating the goals and incremental progress to both network members and the general public (including consumers and other stakeholders).

While key informants want to see success all along the way, they also recognize that the long-term investment that real change requires is hard, grueling, and requires both financial and human capital. They also want to see that the network leadership is willing to make appropriate adjustments as new information surfaces. For instance, if evaluation shows the network is not making progress in the way it had anticipated, the network leader(s) should make adjustments even if those adjustments were challenging and required management of dissent from network members.

12. Risk that the coordination will not improve families’ ability to access programs that meet their needs.

Key informants, especially direct service providers, were passionate about serving parents and families well and striving to meet the unique needs of diverse families. They believe the network can be valuable to the consumer in both direct and indirect ways.

If the network helps fill the gaps or needs in parenting education services so parents have better access and services that better meet their needs, then key informants perceive that as a direct benefit to the consumer. If the network supports the parenting education providers and parent-, family-, and child-serving community so that those stakeholders can provide better information and referral to the consumer, then key informants see that as an indirect benefit to the consumer and a direct benefit to the parenting education provider community.

Key informants gave mixed reviews on existing services like Clackamas County's Family Education and Support Network (FESN) and 211 Info. Many noted FESN as an example of a promising service that could potentially be expanded or mimicked in other counties to create a robust system for providers and consumers or parents but also noted it requires much work to encourage providers to continue entering their parenting education offerings and to keep awareness high with continual cohorts of new parents. This illuminates the challenge of maintaining new projects or infrastructure through transitions in leadership and staff.

Similarly, many mentioned 211 Info as a potentially very successful mechanism to increase awareness of parenting education offerings in the Metro area yet a number of key informants said it had a long way to go before it would be user-friendly for parents or even providers due to the "blitz referral" 211 provides which then requires parents or providers to do extensive follow-up to find available, relevant, and accessible parenting education programs that meet their schedule and needs.

B. Network Coordination Logistics

Informants were asked about aspects of *organization and management* of a network including what criteria and considerations should be used to determine a hub or network configuration and what functions are best coordinated across multiple organizations.

1. The network will need to both build upon common interests and respect the uniqueness of counties and communities.

Nearly every key informant discussed the issues that made their county or community highly unique compared to other parts of the Metro area. In particular, there was a dislike for efforts that felt like they were being heavily directed from Multnomah County without any realistic consideration of what families in Clackamas and Washington counties experience (e.g. isolation, limited access to the Internet, and barriers related to cultural and linguistic differences). Additionally, within Multnomah County there was resistance to being directed from the west region of the county.

2. The network will need to bridge silos within and among counties that are making it difficult to see, understand and connect different parts of the system.

When asked about the gaps and needs of Metro-Portland's current system of parenting education, the most common responses were "there is no system" or "I can only speak to my county" or "I can only speak about my program." Key informants said silos exist within

their counties and that the Metro area counties function separately from each other. As one key informant put it, “you need a passport” to get services across county lines due to restrictive public and private funding streams that limit which areas and for which populations parenting education providers can use funding.

However, key informants believe that this is not how families function. For instance, within one family the child can be born in one county, attend child care in another, and have a parent working in a third county. Similarly, due to gentrification in Multnomah County, families (particularly families of color and low-income families) move further east yet still have a sense of community and attachment to their church and other trusted, familiar places in the west.

3. The network will need to innovate and organize at multiple levels to effectively meet the needs of remote and isolated families.

After trying to address the needs of rural and remote communities or culturally-isolated communities by offering programming in home language, arranging transportation, meals and child care and other means, the current hubs have found they still need to use other innovative methods to reach many communities. These include embedding in local institutions or gather places, staff who reflect the families being served and recruiting appropriate parents from within local communities and training them as parent educators. The network will need to accommodate highly-centralized as well as disbursed methods of coordination.

C. Network Oversight Structure

Informants were asked about the elements of *supervision and responsibility* of the hub or network that ensure that the hub or network can best achieve a stronger and more coordinated system of parenting education in the Metro region. This includes the network characteristics key informants perceive as important as well as network oversight functions where key informants believe the network could provide value, if it has a supervising, leading, or coordinating role.

1. The network can serve as the “one door” for needed information, yet there should be no “wrong doors.”

Key informants believe the network could potentially serve as the “one door” which parenting education providers, systems partners (e.g. doctors, case managers, etc.), and consumers could use to access the information they need, including relevant, accessible, quality parenting education information, services, and supports.

An overwhelming majority of key informants talked about the need for a “clearinghouse” that would work for the entire Metro area. This is envisioned as a more robust FESN or more user-friendly 211 system where providers or parents could call or search a database using specific criteria (e.g. date; time; duration; cost; provisions for child care, transportation, food, scholarships; location and whether it is easily accessible for public transit; languages offered in; age of child, etc.) to find programs that meet the needs of families. It was noted that in order for this service to be successful it must be kept up-to-date, show the quality of the program (i.e., it should not include programs that “someone

thought up in their office” and is not supported by any research), and show service offerings across the tri-county area.

Key informants also said there should be no “wrong doors” for parents meaning that wherever a parent reaches out for help, help should be available. This relates to comments that there must be multiple ways for parents and families to access help based on their situation. For instance, an Internet-based tool cannot be the only method to access help because there are significant populations of families that do not have Internet access. Similarly, English-only supports create barriers for non-English speaking families and high-literacy materials create barriers for parents with limited literacy skills.

2. The network should provide continual, specialized, high-quality training.

More than half of the key informants identified this as a need they think the network could fulfill. Program administrators and parenting education providers want to know where they can go for continual, specialized, high-quality training. They are interested in doing this with other providers to build a sense of community, save costs, and increase their professional development by learning from the experience of others. In regards to cost savings, several mentioned they would be willing to donate meeting space and one mentioned her wish that curricula could be shared among different agencies perhaps through checking them out through the library system.

3. The network should promote quality control measures for program offerings and professional training while addressing the need to address emerging and promising practices

Key informants spoke quite a bit about “quality” both in regards to developing quality standards for parenting education programs and for provider training. Developing quality standards for parenting education programs was a need identified by direct service providers and systems partners that refer parents to parenting education. While key informants were very quick to discuss the curricula they use in detail, they were not sure about what research was behind other curricula or programs being used in the Metro area. As noted in the Overview, while key informants want a quality control measure and believe the network can help with that function, they also want the network to acknowledge the emerging and promising practices that work effectively with diverse populations.

4. The network should regularly monitor and report the successes of the network to stakeholders.

Key informants expect the network to be accountable for achieving its goals. Not achieving success was mentioned as a significant risk by a number of key informants. Thus, key informants want to see that the network is regularly monitoring its activities to learn what level of progress it is making. They believe this type of monitoring and reporting can also help keep members motivated by showing the gains achieved together are worth the sacrifice they make to participate in a collaborative effort that may require their time and other trade-offs such as independent decision-making.

5. The network should articulate and communicate the benefits of parenting education within and across communities.

Key informants believe this is critical to gain credibility with network members and the consumer base and/or general public. Some key informants said there should be a public relations element to the communications work of the network so the consumer can be reminded that parenting education is important, available, and for *all* parents which would help with de-stigmatizing asking for help.

6. The network should convene and nurture networks of parenting education professionals and stakeholders to improve understanding of and referral to the constellation of supports for families.

When asked to elaborate on what they hoped increased coordination and convening would achieve, key informants were clear that the initial step is to better understand the universe of services so that they can better serving their clients, build community and a better sense of support, and generally increase awareness of what parenting education exists.

D. Lead Organization Characteristics

Key informants were asked to identify desirable characteristics of a lead organization, which would coordinate a local or regional parenting education network, given the current parenting education providers and partners in the Metro area.

1. The network leader(s) should behave as an inclusive, open-minded diplomat who works well with others and uses its influence when necessary.

Key informants are seeking a leader with demonstrated successful performance as a respected leader who can work across sectors and among diverse populations in effective ways. While key informants were clear what qualities they want in leadership, it was hard to identify any one entity that might work for their own county let alone the tri-county area.

2. The lead organization needs to have widespread credibility and trust.

Key informants mention a variety of characteristics related to how a lead organization operates, how it positions its power and authority relative to partners and the type and sophistication of leadership it provides. Among the characteristics mentioned as desirable are: Strong history providing parenting education services and willingness to build on what exists; Existing role providing some services across the designated region; Leadership and willingness to spur regional conversations; Awareness of and sensitivity to the different community, culture and economic characteristics affecting communities and partners; Willingness to limit their own actions for regional benefit; Awareness of the relationships necessary to move a regional initiative and understanding about how to cultivate them; Ability to dedicate consistent staff and focus to the effort.

With the size and complexity of the metropolitan Portland area, the majority of key informants said there is no one lead organization that can span the unique and common perspective and has the trust of enough players on its own. In the current hubs, trust of

the lead organization is enhanced by having decisions run through local early childhood committees for discussion and approval, prior to decisions at the regional level. In the metro area, a variety of organizations may need to share leadership to provide the necessary level of credibility and trust.

E. Governance

Informants were asked how the system should be managed, including people, vision development, and processes (e.g. membership, frequency of meetings, guiding documents, etc.), including the concept of collaborative governance in which actors “come together, evolve, implement, and oversee rules.”¹ The starting idea for collaborative governance is that multiple players agree that working together creates more lasting, effective solutions.²

1. A broad array of stakeholders should be engaged.

Key informants suggested that given the scope and interconnectedness of family needs, the network should engage as broad an array of stakeholders as possible. Family needs can cross sectors that deal with a range of issues such as basic needs assistance, mental health, addiction recovery, and/or domestic abuse. Key informants believe a variety of public systems need to be involved (e.g. Department of Human Services, WIC, self sufficiency (TANF), counties, corrections, courts, maternity case management, health clinics, mental health, Healthy Start, Early Head Start, Head Start, and schools) as do stakeholders from parenting education, child care, non-profits, community leaders (e.g. from business and faith), and funders. Key informants also noted that due to time constraints and transportation and language barriers, the network would be wise to consider ways to effectively engage diverse stakeholders as efforts progress.

2. A tiered approach to governance might be beneficial.

The leadership of each current hub interviewed functioned differently, but each was utilizing the existing early childhood committees originally created as part of the Commission on Children and Families structure as the local/county-based decision making body. Similar to the North Carolina Smart Start model, current hub leaders often work with the regional body to establish budget and program parameters and let local (county) bodies make recommendations regarding what is best for their communities within those parameters. This approach fits with many of the comments raised by other key informants as well.

3. Increased engagement of leaders from diverse cultural, immigrant, and parent communities is needed.

Most key informants mentioned the need to increase involvement from cultural, immigrant populations and from parents. They expressed a hesitancy to be involved in an effort that could be perceived as “top down” whether it is funders strongly directing network members or parenting education professionals assuming they can design a system for parenting education in isolation of parent involvement and input.

4. Diverse methods of meeting, engaging and participating are needed.

Key informants also noted that due to time constraints and transportation and language

¹ Zadek, S. (January, 2006).

² National Policy Consensus Center. (n.d.).

barriers, the network would be wise to consider how to effectively engage diverse stakeholders in flexible and accessible ways as efforts progress.

F. Membership Criteria for Organizations Participating in the Network

This section describes criteria to use to determine which parenting education and information sources can participate in the network. Key informants suggested that membership be open, broad and inclusive while promoting increased quality and appropriate service availability across the region.

None of the current hubs interviewed has a specific policy regarding which types of organizations can be members and which cannot. Typically, membership is comprised of services providers and some referrers/stakeholders in the public and non-profit sectors. None of the hubs established quality criteria for members, though funds from the OPEC initiative were restricted to evidence-based programs and curricula and were typically focused on filling gaps in parenting education classes, rather than other more intensive services such as home visiting programs.

As noted in C.3. above, key informants want a quality control measure that helps identify reputable programs and indicated they hope the network will find a way to promote high-quality programs yet still acknowledge the promising or emerging practices that are effective, particularly for ethnic or rural populations.

G. Leverage and Incentives

Key informants indicate that there is great potential for the hub and its investors to increase awareness of the universe of parenting education resources. They also suggest that influential leaders assembled around the Metropolitan Portland Regional Action Initiative are in a position to: Sustain attention and commitment to parenting through sustained funding and dedication of staffing capacity; Clearly articulate the goals of the initiative and the short and long-term results anticipated and achieved; Diplomatically help the network to prioritize goals and manage conflict.

As noted in the Overview, the general state of readiness of key informants to embark in earnest on a collaborative effort is fairly low overall based upon the difficulty of conceptualizing a local or regional network, managing the changes on the horizon from the Governor's redesign effort, and tolerating fatigue and the challenges of limited resources. These stakeholders are interested in seeing what the value proposition of the network is so that they can assess whether involvement is worthy of time, effort, and other resources.

Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Key Informants

METRO-PORTLAND REGIONAL ACTION INITIATIVE (RAI) PARENTING EDUCATION NETWORK PROJECT KEY PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Information

Stakeholder name	
Title, Organization	
Contact information	
Interview date, time	

Introduction

Hello. I am Kristin Wiggins from Dovetailing Consulting, a Seattle-based firm that specializes in connecting concepts, strategies, and people. We are working on behalf of the project sponsors The Oregon Community Foundation, the Portland Children's Levy, and Social Venture Partners Portland. This interview is conducted as part of the Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative (RAI) Parenting Education Network Project's exploration of the best way to strengthen the coordination of parenting education programs in Metro-Portland (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties).

The purposes of this interview are to discover insights, perspectives, and information to help:

- Inform the approach for developing one or more Parenting Education Networks or other coordinating approaches in the Metro-Portland area
- Inform recommendations for leadership and governance of the parenting education network(s) or coordination approaches

This is part of a larger research plan, conducted by Dovetailing, which includes: (1) meetings and interviews with parenting education providers and stakeholders; (2) two surveys, one for parents and one for parenting education providers and stakeholders; and (3) combining the results from the meetings, interview, and surveys with examination of what has worked well in other parts of Oregon and across the nation. The research project will be completed in fall 2011.

The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project is grounded in two fundamental beliefs:

- All parents can benefit from education programs that help them build strong family relationships and do the best job they can as their child's first and most important teachers, and
- Every Oregon community should have a range of parenting education and support services.

There are no right answers to the questions that we will discuss with you. Your thoughts, observations and ideas are what are most valuable to us. Your comments are confidential to

the project sponsors and consultant team and will be shared with them in a report format in a constructive manner and attributed to you, but will not be made public.

This phone interview should take 30- to 45-minutes. Project sponsors appreciate the gift of time and insight that you are offering.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little about your area of work and how it relates to parenting education?
2. The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project uses a broad definition of parenting education that includes the types of information, support, and services that help parents, grandparents and caretakers expand their insights, understanding, attitudes, and acquire knowledge and skills about the development of both parents and of their children and the relationship between them. This includes children and youth of all ages, with a particular focus on families with children from prenatal to six years old.

When you think about parenting education in this way, what do you see as the biggest gaps in Metro-Portland's current system of parenting education (e.g., lack of an easy way for parents/referrers to find available programs and schedules or a shortage of programs for fathers and parents of teens, programs in languages other than English)?

3. When you think about the array of systems and supports (e.g., child welfare and child care) with which families interact, with which ones do you think a Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network should connect to make it easy for parents to know:
 - (a) that parenting education is available;
 - (b) *what* type of parenting education is available; and
 - (c) *how* to find a convenient, relevant program?
4. What do you think are the most important factors to consider in coordinating parenting education in the metro area?
5. What benefits would you like to see a coordinated approach to parenting education achieve in five years? What would make it a success in your eyes?
6. Still looking five years into the future, what characteristics do you think will contribute most to a Network's credibility and its ability to earn the trust of its members and the community (e.g., inclusive decision-making)?

7. What would you be willing to give or trade in order to make these achievements and make big gains in the gaps that you described earlier? (e.g., independent decision-making, your/staff time or other resources)?
8. Now thinking of the present, what do you think are the risks and barriers associated with creating a local or regional Parenting Education Network?
9. What kinds of characteristics and capacities will an agency or agencies that convene, lead, and staff the parenting education networks (across or within communities) need for the networks to be successful?

[Note: The area to be served by the Network(s) is yet to be determined. That is one of the research questions for this project.]

10. Do you have ideas about specific organizations or types of organizations that have many of these characteristics and capacities?
11. Do you have other thoughts to share?

-- Thank you --

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Systems Partners

METRO-PORTLAND REGIONAL ACTION INITIATIVE (RAI) PARENTING EDUCATION NETWORK PROJECT KEY PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SYSTEMS PARTNERS

Interview Information

Stakeholder name	
Title, Organization	
Contact information	
Interview date, time	

Introduction

Hello. I am Kristin Wiggins from Dovetailing Consulting, a Seattle-based firm that specializes in connecting concepts, strategies, and people. We are working on behalf of the project sponsors The Oregon Community Foundation, the Portland Children's Levy, and Social Venture Partners Portland. This interview is conducted as part of the Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative (RAI) Parenting Education Network Project's exploration of the best way to strengthen the coordination of parenting education programs in Metro-Portland (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties).

The purposes of this interview are to discover insights, perspectives, and information to help:

- Inform the approach for developing one or more Parenting Education Networks or other coordinating approaches in the Metro-Portland area
- Inform recommendations for leadership and governance of the parenting education network(s) or coordination approaches

This is part of a larger research plan, conducted by Dovetailing, which includes: (1) meetings and interviews with parenting education providers and stakeholders; (2) two surveys, one for parents and one for parenting education providers and stakeholders; and (3) combining the results from the meetings, interview, and surveys with examination of what has worked well in other parts of Oregon and across the nation. The research project will be completed in fall 2011.

The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project is grounded in two fundamental beliefs:

- All parents can benefit from education programs that help them build strong family relationships and do the best job they can as their child's first and most important teachers, and
- Every Oregon community should have a range of parenting education and support services.

There are no right answers to the questions that we will discuss with you. Your thoughts, observations and ideas are what are most valuable to us. Your comments are confidential to the project sponsors and consultant team and will be shared with them in a report format in a constructive manner and attributed to you, but will not be made public.

This phone interview should take 30- to 45-minutes. Project sponsors appreciate the gift of time and insight that you are offering.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little about your area of work and how it relates to parenting education?
2. The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project uses a broad definition of parenting education that includes the types of information, support, and services that help parents, grandparents and caretakers expand their insights, understanding, attitudes, and acquire knowledge and skills about the development of both parents and of their children and the relationship between them. This includes children and youth of all ages, with a particular focus on families with children from prenatal to six years old.

When you think about parenting education in this way, what do you see as the biggest gaps in Metro-Portland's current system of parenting education (e.g., lack of an easy way for parents/referrers to find available programs and schedules or a shortage of programs for fathers and parents of teens, programs in languages other than English)?

3. When you think about the array of systems and supports (e.g., child welfare and child care) with which families interact, with which ones do you think a Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network should connect to make it easy for parents to know:
 - (a) that parenting education is available;
 - (b) *what* type of parenting education is available; and
 - (c) *how* to find a convenient, relevant program?
4. What do you think are the most important factors to consider in coordinating parenting education in the metro area?
5. What benefits would you like to see a coordinated approach to parenting education achieve in five years? What would make it a success in your eyes?
6. Still looking five years into the future, what characteristics do you think will contribute most to a Network's credibility and its ability to earn the trust of its members and the community (e.g., inclusive decision-making)?

7. What do you think the _____ (your organization, e.g., courts, school district) would be willing to do or give in order to make big gains in filling these gaps? (e.g., your/staff time or other resources)?
8. Now thinking of the present, what do you think are the risks and barriers associated with creating a local or regional Parenting Education Network?
9. What kinds of characteristics and capacities will an agency or agencies that convene, lead, and staff the parenting education networks (across or within communities) need for the networks to be successful?

[Note: The area to be served by the Network(s) is yet to be determined. That is one of the research questions for this project.]

10. Do you have ideas about specific organizations or types of organizations that have many of these characteristics and capacities?
11. Do you have other thoughts to share?

-- Thank you --

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Key Informants (REVISED)

METRO-PORTLAND REGIONAL ACTION INITIATIVE (RAI) PARENTING EDUCATION NETWORK PROJECT KEY PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Information

Stakeholder name	
Title, Organization	
Contact information	
Interview date, time	

Introduction

Hello. I am Kristin Wiggins from Dovetailing Consulting, a Seattle-based firm that specializes in connecting concepts, strategies, and people. We are working on behalf of the project sponsors The Oregon Community Foundation, the Portland Children's Levy, and Social Venture Partners Portland. This interview is conducted as part of the Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative (RAI) Parenting Education Network Project's exploration of the best way to strengthen the coordination of parenting education programs in Metro-Portland (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties).

There is not yet a proposed network structure. The purposes of this interview are to discover insights, perspectives, and information to help:

- Inform the approach for developing one or more Parenting Education Networks or other coordinating approaches in the Metro-Portland area
- Inform recommendations for leadership and governance of the parenting education network(s) or coordination approaches

This is part of a larger research plan, conducted by Dovetailing, which includes: (1) meetings and interviews with parenting education providers and stakeholders; (2) two surveys, one for parents and one for parenting education providers and stakeholders; and (3) combining the results from the meetings, interview, and surveys with examination of what has worked well in other parts of Oregon and across the nation. The research project will be completed in fall 2011.

The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project is grounded in two fundamental beliefs:

- All parents can benefit from education programs that help them build strong family relationships and do the best job they can as their child's first and most important teachers, and
- Every Oregon community should have a range of parenting education and support services.

There are no right answers to the questions that we will discuss with you. Your thoughts, observations and ideas are what are most valuable to us. Your comments are confidential to the project sponsors and consultant team and will be shared with them in a report format in a constructive manner and attributed to you, but will not be made public.

This phone interview should take 30- to 45-minutes. Project sponsors appreciate the gift of time and insight that you are offering.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little about your area of work and how it relates to parenting education?
2. What do you think are the most important factors to consider in coordinating parenting education in the Metro area?
3. The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project uses a broad definition of parenting education that includes the types of information, support, and services that help parents, grandparents and caretakers expand their insights, understanding, attitudes, and acquire knowledge and skills about the development of both parents and of their children and the relationship between them. This includes children and youth of all ages, with a particular focus on families with children from prenatal to six years old.

When you think about parenting education in this way, what do you see as the biggest gaps and needs in Metro-Portland's current system of parenting education (e.g., lack of an easy way for parents/referrers to find available programs and schedules or a shortage of programs for fathers and parents of teens, programs in languages other than English)?

4. What would a local or regional Parenting Education Network need to look like and do in order to be successful in your eyes?
For instance:
 - a. What would its functions and authority need to be?
 - b. What groups, organizations, and/or communities need to be connected?
5. What would your organization be willing to contribute in order to achieve a more coordinated approach to parenting education? (E.g., your/staff time and expertise, independent decision-making, resources like free meeting space, etc.)
6. What do you think are the risks and barriers associated with creating a local or regional Parenting Education Network?

7. Successful network(s) require leadership and staffing to foster coordination and collaboration among independent agencies. Thinking about the parenting education providers and partners in Metro-Portland:
 - a. What skills would a coordinating agency need to be successful?
 - b. What are a few words that describe HOW they could function to help make meaningful improvements to parenting education? (e.g. transparency, equitably, consistency, etc.)
8. Do you have other thoughts to share?

-- Thank you --

Appendix D: Interview Protocol for Systems Partners (REVISED)

METRO-PORTLAND REGIONAL ACTION INITIATIVE (RAI) PARENTING EDUCATION NETWORK PROJECT KEY PERSON INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR SYSTEMS PARTNERS

Interview Information

Stakeholder name	
Title, Organization	
Contact information	
Interview date, time	

Introduction

Hello. I am Kristin Wiggins from Dovetailing Consulting, a Seattle-based firm that specializes in connecting concepts, strategies, and people. We are working on behalf of the project sponsors The Oregon Community Foundation, the Portland Children's Levy, and Social Venture Partners Portland. This interview is conducted as part of the Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative (RAI) Parenting Education Network Project's exploration of the best way to strengthen the coordination of parenting education programs in Metro-Portland (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties).

There is not yet a proposed network structure. The purposes of this interview are to discover insights, perspectives, and information to help:

- Inform the approach for developing one or more Parenting Education Networks or other coordinating approaches in the Metro-Portland area
- Inform recommendations for leadership and governance of the parenting education network(s) or coordination approaches

This is part of a larger research plan, conducted by Dovetailing, which includes: (1) meetings and interviews with parenting education providers and stakeholders; (2) two surveys, one for parents and one for parenting education providers and stakeholders; and (3) combining the results from the meetings, interview, and surveys with examination of what has worked well in other parts of Oregon and across the nation. The research project will be completed in fall 2011.

The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project is grounded in two fundamental beliefs:

- All parents can benefit from education programs that help them build strong family relationships and do the best job they can as their child's first and most important teachers, and
- Every Oregon community should have a range of parenting education and support services.

There are no right answers to the questions that we will discuss with you. Your thoughts, observations and ideas are what are most valuable to us. Your comments are confidential to the project sponsors and consultant team and will be shared with them in a report format in a constructive manner and attributed to you, but will not be made public.

This phone interview should take 30- to 45-minutes. Project sponsors appreciate the gift of time and insight that you are offering.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Interview Questions

1. Can you tell me a little about your area of work and how it relates to parenting education?
2. What do you think are the most important factors to consider in coordinating parenting education in the Metro area?
3. The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project uses a broad definition of parenting education that includes the types of information, support, and services that help parents, grandparents and caretakers expand their insights, understanding, attitudes, and acquire knowledge and skills about the development of both parents and of their children and the relationship between them. This includes children and youth of all ages, with a particular focus on families with children from prenatal to six years old.

When you think about parenting education in this way, what do you see as the biggest gaps and needs in Metro-Portland's current system of parenting education (e.g., lack of an easy way for parents/referrers to find available programs and schedules or a shortage of programs for fathers and parents of teens, programs in languages other than English)?

4. What would a local or regional Parenting Education Network need to look like and do in order to be successful in your eyes?
For instance:
 - a. What would its functions and authority need to be?
 - b. What groups, organizations, and/or communities need to be connected?
5. From your vantage point, what would your organization or community (e.g., courts, faith community, school district) be willing to contribute in order to make big gains in the areas of need we talked about? (E.g., your/staff time and expertise, resources like free meeting space, etc.)
6. What do you think are the risks and barriers associated with creating a local or regional Parenting Education Network?

7. Successful network(s) require leadership and staffing to foster coordination and collaboration among independent agencies. Thinking about the parenting education providers and partners in Metro-Portland:
 - a. What skills would a coordinating agency need to be successful?
 - b. What are a few words that describe HOW they could function to help make meaningful improvements to parenting education? (e.g. transparency, equitably, consistency, etc.)
8. Do you have other thoughts to share?

-- Thank you --

Appendix E: Interview Protocol for Current Hubs

METRO-PORTLAND REGIONAL ACTION INITIATIVE (RAI) PARENTING EDUCATION NETWORK PROJECT

PARENTING EDUCATION HUB LEADERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview Information

Stakeholder name	
Title, Organization	
Contact information	
Interview date, time	

Introduction

Hello. I am Garrison Kurtz from Dovetailing Consulting, a Seattle-based firm that specializes in connecting concepts, strategies, and people. We are working on behalf of the project sponsors The Oregon Community Foundation, the Portland Children's Levy, and Social Venture Partners Portland. This interview is conducted as part of the Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative (RAI) Parenting Education Network Project's exploration of the best way to strengthen the coordination of parenting education programs in Metro-Portland (Clackamas, Multnomah, and Washington counties) with its large and diverse population.

The purposes of this interview are to discover insights, perspectives, and information to help:

- Inform the approach for developing one or more Parenting Education Networks or other coordinating approaches in the Metro-Portland area
- Inform recommendations for leadership and governance of the parenting education network(s) or coordination approaches

This is part of a larger research plan, conducted by Dovetailing, which includes: (1) meetings and interviews with parenting education providers and stakeholders; (2) two surveys, one for parents and one for parenting education providers and stakeholders; and (3) combining the results from the meetings, interview, and surveys with examination of what has worked well in

other parts of Oregon and across the nation. The research project will be completed in fall 2011.

The Metro-Portland RAI Parenting Education Network Project is grounded in two fundamental beliefs:

- All parents can benefit from education programs that help them build strong family relationships and do the best job they can as their child's first and most important teachers, and
- Every Oregon community should have a range of parenting education and support services.

There are no right answers to the questions that we will discuss with you. Your thoughts, observations and ideas are what are most valuable to us. Your comments are confidential to the project sponsors and consultant team and will be shared with them in a report format in a constructive manner and attributed to you, but will not be made public.

This phone interview should take about 45-minutes. Project sponsors appreciate the gift of time and insight that you are offering.

Do you have any questions before we get started?

Interview Questions

The hub concept assumes that there will be a lead agency responsible for coordination and other activities and other roles, but that partner organizations will also play roles. With your hub, what kinds of roles do you play as the Hub leader and what roles do partner organizations play? Is this division of labor different from your original thinking? If so, what prompted the change and how did you arrive at the new roles?

1. Families have diverse needs, which creates a need for parenting education networks to include or connect with a variety of organizations (e.g., non-profit, for-profit, government) and systems (e.g. early intervention, health care or child care. Has it been hard to create these connections in some instances? What would you counsel a new hub to do early on?
2. Collaborative efforts take time, establishment of common purpose and confidence in the processes that support it. How have these factors informed how your thinking and decisions about what is required for membership, how decisions are made and how authority for carrying out work is delegated?
3. It can be hard to be the “lead” in a collaborative effort due to local history, competition for resources and differences in organizational cultures. What have been the most effective

ways to promote trust in you as the lead organization and trust among hub partners/members?

4. If your Parenting Education Hub works in multiple counties, how has that informed development of your Hub? What challenges have you had in working across jurisdictions? What advice would you offer a new Hub?
5. Do you have an Action Plan or Work Plan that guides the activities of the hub? If not, what goals and strategies are you working on as a hub and how do you maintain focus of partners on them?
6. Is your hub developing systems for any of the issues below? If so can you tell us about them?
 - a) Access/referral
 - b) Community planning
 - c) Staff training, professional development and purchase of curricula
 - d) Evaluation, quality assurance/continuous quality improvement
7. What benefits has your community gained through the efforts of the parenting education Hub? What kinds of things (e.g. independence of decision-making, time or resources) have members/partners been willing to give or trade off in order to achieve these benefits?
8. Are there any other lessons you would like to share with the Metro-Portland area about creating a coordinated parenting education network?

-- Thank you --

Appendix F: Research Questions

Metro-Portland Regional Action Initiative (RAI) Parenting Education Network Project Research Questions and Sub-Questions

Research questions with sub-questions are listed below. See “Stakeholder Data by Type and Gathering Method(s)” chart for information to be gathered from each stakeholder group.

I. Strategic Value of Coordination

- A. What are the benefits and risks of coordination (e.g. reduction in service duplication, filling of gaps in available services, etc.)?
1. What do you see as the benefits to participating in the coordination of parent education services?
 - a. Communication with easy and reliable access to information about opportunities and needs
 - b. Mutual learning from other organizations, partners and our community
 - c. System-wide relationships and processes (e.g., courts and schools know the full set of services available in their community and how to help families access these services)
 - d. Community-wide strategic planning (Partners and communities work to together assess community needs, set community-wide goals/strategies and tackle system issues such as access to services or evaluation.)
 - e. Efficiencies such as reduced time spent on information gathering (e.g., training and funding opportunities) and shared training and evaluation costs)
 - f. Improved access and services to the community
 - g. Other?
 2. What do you see as the risks to coordination of parent education services:
 - a. Perception of reduced independence/autonomy (inc. funder, provider, government)
 - b. Reduction of opportunity/market share to individual agencies
 - c. Coordination is not worth the investment of time that it takes to coordinate?
 - d. “New partnership/new name” creates more confusion among parents and others about where to turn for help
 - e. Other?

II. Hub (or Network) Coordination Logistics

- A. What criteria should be applied to determining Hub areas and what functions should be coordinated?
- I. What criteria should we apply in organizing hubs (e.g. maximum distance of

- parenting education services from hub center, existence of viable hub centers; similarity of community/parent demographics among different hubs; and urban, suburban, exurban, cultural composition of parent population, etc.)?
- a. Optimal maximum distance from services
 - b. Similarity of community urban, rural, suburban exurban (analysis)
 - c. Similarity of parent/community demographics (analysis)
 - d. Consistency with boundaries of other municipal or service areas
 - e. Existence of viable candidates that can serve as hub coordinating entities
2. What logistical functions are best coordinated trans-organizationally?
- a. Convening
 - b. Communications
 - c. Staffing

III. Hub (or Network) Oversight Structure

- A. What structure would best achieve a stronger and more coordinated system of parenting education in the Metro region?
1. If a collaborative hub is deemed beneficial, which models are most promising and what are the specific pros and cons of each (including the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative parenting education hub model)?
 - a. Which two-three Oregon Parenting Hubs are working best?
 - b. What improvements have they created?
 - c. What are the characteristics that enable these improvements?
 - d. What are the pros and cons?
 2. If a collaborative hub is deemed not beneficial, what are some alternatives?
 - a. Modified Hub/lead agency approach
 - b. Coalition or collaborative with funded, designated leadership and coordination capacity
 - c. Government led coordination structure
 3. What functions are best coordinated trans-organizationally?
 - a. Communications (e.g., opportunities, emerging issues, needs and advocacy information.
 - b. Assessment of community needs and extent to which these needs are being met
 - c. Planning and System building (e.g., fill in gaps, reduce duplication, systematic processes for schools and courts to refer/connect families with needed services)
 - d. Training and professional development
 - e. Development of quality standards
 - f. Evaluation and continuous quality improvement

IV. Lead Organization Characteristics

- A. What are desirable characteristics of trans-organizational administrators?
1. Capacities (e.g., leadership, communication, cultural competence, knowledge and demonstrated experience with community planning, system building expertise, delivers quality parenting education programs, evaluation and continuous quality improvement)
 2. Financial stability of lead agency/sustainability of the coordinated efforts
 3. Demonstrated commitment to and modeling of best practices programming
 4. Relationships with parenting education programs, system partners (e.g., schools, courts) and community
- B. What organizations are likely candidates to undertake system leadership and administration?
1. What types of organizations have the characteristics noted above?

V. Governance

- A. How should governance of the system be handled, including people, vision development, and processes (e.g. membership, frequency of meetings, guiding documents, etc.)?
1. What will be the lead entity roles and responsibilities (e.g., coordination, communication, training and professional development, data collection and uses, (e.g., community need, utilization) fund development, evaluation)?
 2. What will be the membership criteria, roles and responsibilities (e.g., types of services offered, use of evidence-based practices)?
 3. What will be the decision-making processes?
 4. What will be the roles and functions of committees?
 5. How frequently will meetings be held?
 6. How will decisions about new members and corrective actions be handled?

VI. Membership Criteria for Organization Participating in the Hubs (or Networks)

- A. What should be the criteria for determining which parenting education and information sources can participate in a coordinated system?
1. Type of services provided
 2. Quality of services provided
 3. Sign on to Memorandum of Agreement (agreement with roles and responsibilities of participating organizations)
 4. Type/legal personality of organization
- Note: Consider levels of membership

VII. Leverage and Incentives

- A. What opportunities are there for the MPRAI to incentivize programs to coalesce around the new elements of the system?
 - 1. How can membership criteria incentivize agencies to advance coordination system goals?
 - 2. Should the structure's boundaries be consistent with the Governor's proposed neighborhood catchment areas?
 - 3. What functions/activities will be required in the parenting coordination systems?
 - 4. What criteria for investment will be established?
- B. How could/should our selected structure(s) connect with and build upon the new neighborhood catchment areas at elementary school sites proposed by Governor Kitzhaber?
 - 1. What are the plans and prospects for the neighborhood catchment areas?
 - 2. What are the opportunities?
 - 3. What are the pros, cons, opportunity costs and financial costs and benefits of building upon new parenting education system?
- C. Are there other leveraging opportunities?