

# OPEC 7-Year Cumulative Summary

2010-2017

Launched in July 2010, the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC) is a multi-year initiative led by The Oregon Community Foundation (OCF), The Ford Family Foundation, and Oregon State University (OSU). Financial supporters of the initiative include OCF, The Ford Family Foundation, the Meyer Memorial Trust, The Collins Foundation, and OCF Donor Advised Funds.

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

## *Mission*

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

## *Vision*

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

## *Goals*

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

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

OPEC has funded regional parenting Hubs through a phased process over the course of seven years. In July 2010, OPEC began its first round of funding for six regional parenting Hubs. In July 2011, six additional Hubs were funded. In July 2014, the initiative continued to grow by funding three new Hubs and expanding the geographical reach of three existing Hubs. Two communities received planning grants in 2014 and from these planning grants, two new Hubs were established in July 2015. Hub funding also ended in 2015 for two of the previous Hubs. One Hub (established in 2014) decided it did not have the infrastructure to adequately support a parenting education Hub and elected not to continue with its OPEC funding. In addition, the OPEC grant for one Hub (established in 2011) was not renewed for a fifth year. In July 2016, two existing Hubs expanded their geographical reach to include three new counties. At the time of this report, there are a total of 15 OPEC Hubs providing parenting education in 29 of 36 Oregon counties plus Siskiyou County, California.

In addition to Hubs, OPEC has funded several rounds of Small and Programming Grant projects over the past seven years. The purpose of the first rounds of the Small Grant program (2010-2016) was to support expansion of access to or enhancement of proven programs to increase parent and family member understanding of the learning and development of young children through group classes and/or home visiting. Each round of Small Grants provided three years of funding. The first round was funded in 2010 and included nine sites across the state. The second round was launched in 2013 and included ten sites in the Portland Metro area that target underserved populations. In 2016-2017, a new round of Programming Grants were awarded to nine organizations receiving funding to expand access to best practice parenting education programs as well as enhanced community partnerships, particularly with the healthcare community. Four of the Programming Grants were awarded to existing Hubs to support collaborative parenting education programming efforts with healthcare partners. In addition, one Hub received a Programming Grant to support evaluation of a community grown, research-based parenting program that encourages parent-child interaction as well as community building.

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

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

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

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

## **Hubs and Programming Grants: Increasing Access to Parenting Programs**

The primary objective of the OPEC initiative is to expand access to high-quality parenting education programs for families of children prenatal through age six. Through the Hubs and Programming/Small Grant projects, evidence-based parenting education programming was expanded to new geographic regions, which increased accessibility for both universal and targeted audiences. OPEC sites used a variety of strategies to engage families in parenting education opportunities that lead to improved parenting outcomes, including:

- *OPEC funded parenting education series* are evidence-based and targeted to parents of children ages 0-6. Most series include 7 to 12 weekly classes using a specific curriculum.
- *Non-OPEC parenting education series* are either offered by grantees using other funding or conducted by partner organizations. Non-OPEC series may use evidence or non-evidence-based curricula or focus on older age ranges.

- *Parent workshops* include one-time events covering special topics or guest speaker presentations.
- *Parent support activities* are recurring programs that bring parents together around a common topic or activity in order to create community and support for parents and youth. Parent support activities often include multiple sessions and seek to enhance interactions between parents and children or encourage connections with other parents.
- *Family activities* are one-time social, recreational, or educational events that sites plan, sponsor, and/or facilitate as part of their overall parenting education and outreach goals.
- *Home visitation* provides parenting education information to parents through a one-on-one approach in their own home. Home visitors often follow a set curriculum that can be adapted to the particular needs of the parents. Alternately, some home visitors may support parents in other ways, such as with community resources referral or case management.

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

**Table 1**

**Programming Numbers for Hubs and Programming/Small Grant Projects, 2010-2017**

| Activity   | Description                | Hubs <sup>1</sup> | Programming/<br>Small Grants <sup>2</sup> | Total         |
|--|----------------------------|-------------------|---|---------------|
| <b>OPEC<br/>Parenting<br/>Education<br/>Series</b>     | Parenting Series Completed | 794               | 228                                       | <b>1,022</b>  |
|  | Parenting Classes          | 8,025             | 3,037                                     | <b>11,062</b> |
|  | Parents Attended           | 6,464             | 2,354                                     | <b>8,818</b>  |
|  | Children/Youth Attended    | 5,707             | 2,000                                     | <b>7,707</b>  |
| <b>Non-OPEC<br/>Parenting<br/>Education<br/>Series</b> | Parenting Series Completed | 1,178             | 79  | <b>1,257</b>  |
|  | Parenting Classes          | 11,595            | 838                                       | <b>12,433</b> |
|  | Parents Attended           | 11,047            | 840                                       | <b>11,887</b> |
|  | Children/Youth Attended    | 8,741             | 654                                       | <b>9,395</b>  |
| <b>Parent<br/>Workshops</b>                            | Number of Workshops        | 1,482             | 143                                       | <b>1,625</b>  |
|  | Parents Attended           | 42,943            | 2,155                                     | <b>45,098</b> |
|  | Children/Youth Attended    | 18,545            | 1,769                                     | <b>20,314</b> |

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**Table 1 (continued)**

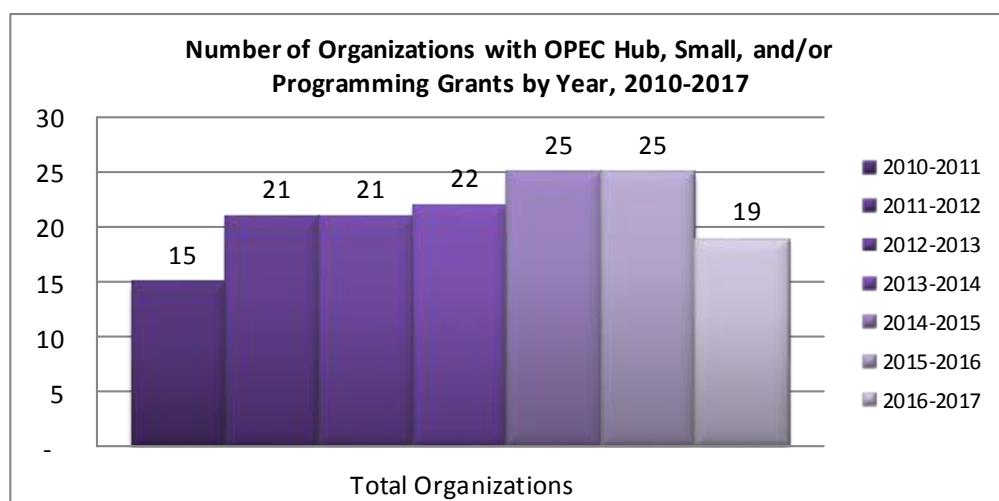
**Programming Numbers for Hubs and Programming/Small Grant Projects, 2010-2017**

| Activity                         | Description              | Hubs <sup>1</sup> | Programming /Small Grants <sup>2</sup> | Total          |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--|----------------|
| <b>Parent Support Activities</b> | Number of Sessions       | 15,439            | 1,860                                  | <b>17,299</b>  |
|                                  | Parents Attended         | 103,430           | 2,655                                  | <b>106,085</b> |
|                                  | Children/Youth Attended  | 121,247           | 2,345                                  | <b>123,592</b> |
| <b>Family Activities</b>         | Number of Activities     | 1,322             | 442                                    | <b>1,764</b>   |
|                                  | People Attended          | 192,663           | 26,483                                 | <b>219,146</b> |
| <b>Home Visits</b>               | Number of Home Visits    | 90,602            | 8,473                                  | <b>99,075</b>  |
|                                  | Total New Families       | 6,847             | 897                                    | <b>7,744</b>   |
|                                  | Total New Children/Youth | 7,621             | 1,415                                  | <b>9,036</b>   |

<sup>1</sup>Hub total does not include programs funded with Programming Grant funding.

<sup>2</sup>Small/Programming Grant total includes all programming reported by Small Grant projects from 2010-2016 as well as programming specifically funded by Programming Grant funds in 2016-2017.

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



**Figure 1**

When viewing the number of series and classes over time, it is important to note that Hub funding is administered in a phased process in which Hubs can apply for full funding for three years, followed by step-down funding in the fourth year and beyond. Additionally, if a Hub expands their region (i.e., adds one or more counties to their Hub's service area), their funding cycle starts over with the opportunity for full funding for an additional three years before step-down funding begins. In Year 7, nine of the Hubs were fully funded and six Hubs were in step-down funding (50% of full funding).

In spite of the decline with step-down funding, the number of OPEC funded series conducted by Hubs has increased by 217% when compared to the first year of the initiative. In addition to OPEC funded series, there has also been a 15% increase in the number of non-OPEC series reported. This includes series targeting parents of older children, non-evidence-based programs, or programs paid for by other funds or implemented by partner organizations. An increase in the availability of parenting education series translated into more parent participation. Parent participation more than doubled (151%) with more parents accessing OPEC-funded series in Year 7 than in the first year of the initiative.

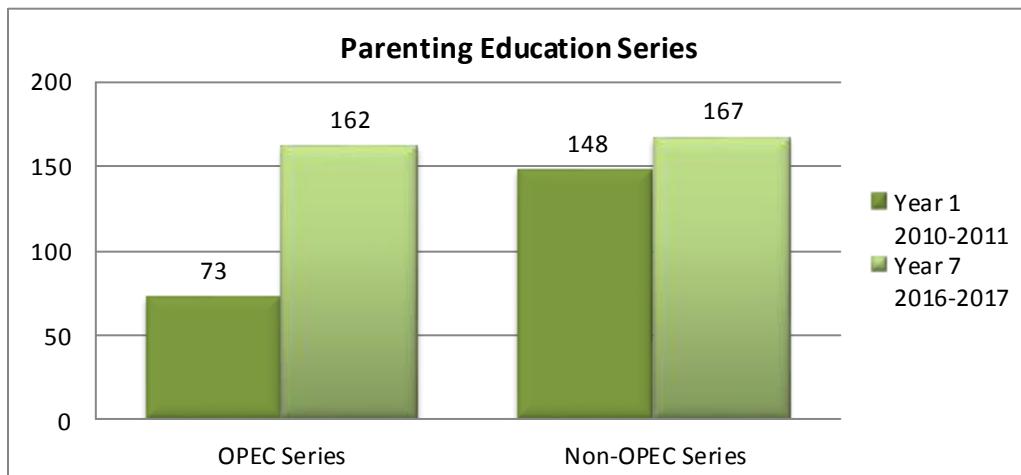
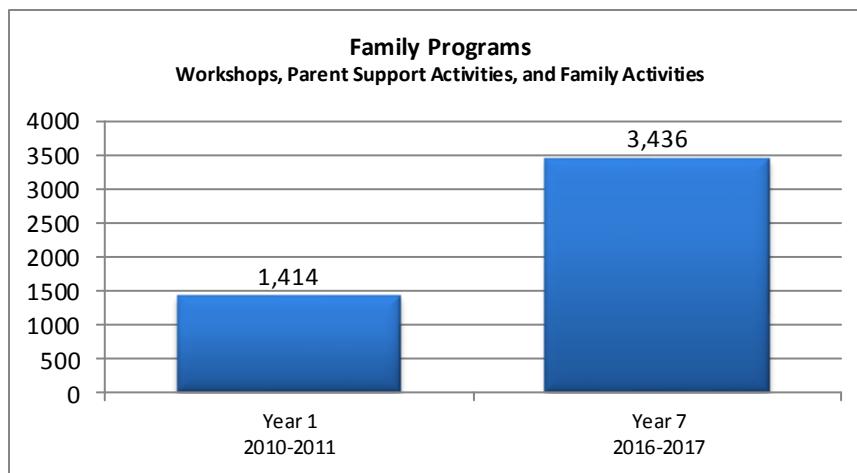


Figure 2

In addition to an increase in evidence-based series, there has also been a significant expansion of additional parenting education opportunities in comparison with the first year of OPEC (see Figure 3). This includes a 556% growth in the number of workshops, a 236% increase in Family Activities, and a 216% increase in Parent Support Activities. This tremendous surge in family programming resulted in double (157% increase) the number of adult and child participants between the first and seventh year of programming.



**Figure 3**

Demographic data from the Parenting Skills Ladder and Parenting Workshop Evaluation surveys provide a description of the families reached through the OPEC initiative. Parents are the target audience for class series and workshops. However, participants may include other community members including school-age students. Table 2 displays the demographic information for parents completing surveys between July 2010 and June 2017.

**Table 2**

|  | <b>Hubs</b><br><b>N = 18,468</b>  | <b>Programming/Small Grants</b><br><b>N = 2,451</b>  |
|--|---|--|
| Age Range of Participant                             | 11 to 99 years  | 15 to 82 years   |
| Average Age of Participant                           | 35 years  | 32 years   |
| Gender   | 69% Female<br>24% Male<br>7% Did Not Specify  | 70% Female<br>27% Male<br>3% Did Not Specify   |
| Race/ethnicity                                       | 66% White<br>18% Hispanic<br>4% Native American<br>1% Black/African American<br>1% Asian<br>10% Other/Did Not Specify | 31% White<br>43% Hispanic<br>2% Native American<br>9% Black/African American<br>7% Asian<br>8% Other/Did Not Specify |
| Parenting Style                                      | 62% With a Partner<br>24% By Self<br>14% Did Not Specify  | 65% With a Partner<br>28% By Self<br>7% Did Not Specify  |
| Use of Services Designated for Low-Income Households | 37% receive WIC<br>43% use Oregon Health Plan<br>27% had school-aged children who received free or reduced lunch      | 50% receive WIC<br>66% use Oregon Health Plan<br>36% had school-aged children who received free or reduced lunch     |

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**Table 2 (continued)**

|                                | <b>Hubs<br/>N = 15,727</b> | <b>Programming/Small Grants<br/>N = 2,305</b> |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Age Range of Children          | Under 1 to 18 years        | Under 1 to 18 years                           |
| Average Age of Children        | 6 years                    | 6 years                                       |
| Children Ages 0-6              | 62%                        | 61%   |
| Average Children per Household | 1.79 children              | 2.02 children                                 |

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

In 2012-2013, the OSU Evaluation team added an additional data collection field to capture the estimated number of participants who were mandated, referred, or involved with Department of Human Services (DHS), if known by the OPEC site. Over the five-year period in which these data have been collected, approximately 19% of parents participating in OPEC funded parenting education series said they were involved with DHS. This number was lower for programs funded by OPEC Hub funding (18%) in comparison to programs funded by Programming Grant funds (22%).

### **Hubs and Programming Grants: Improving Parent and Child Skills**

Parenting skills are critical to children's optimal well-being and development. Research has shown that effective parenting education can strengthen and support families and communities in the prevention of child abuse and neglect, promote protective factors, and lead to positive outcomes for both parents and children. Increasing positive parenting capacity among parents is the primary objective of the OPEC initiative.

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

Using the Parenting Skills Ladder, parents assess their parenting skills before and after participation in a class series. Overall, during the past seven years, parents completing the PSL reported significant improvement in parenting skills across all items of the survey. The following

tables present aggregate PSL data from 18,208 parents who participated in parenting education series through Hub and Small/Programming Grant sites from 2010-2017.

**Table 3**

**Parenting Skills Before and After Participation**

| Parenting Skills   | Before Participation | After Participation |
|--|----------------------|---------------------|
| Know normal behavior for my child(ren)'s age level       | 3.2                  | 4.9***              |
| Show my child(ren) love and affection frequently         | 4.7                  | 5.5***              |
| Listen to my child(ren) to understand their feelings     | 3.7                  | 5.2***              |
| Help my child(ren) feel good about themselves            | 4.1                  | 5.3***              |
| Set and stick to reasonable limits and rules             | 3.4                  | 4.9***              |
| Know fun activities to help my child(ren) learn          | 3.7                  | 5.1***              |
| Find positive ways to guide and discipline my child(ren) | 3.5                  | 5.1***              |
| Play with my child(ren) frequently                       | 4.1                  | 5.2***              |
| Protect my child(ren) from unsafe conditions             | 4.9                  | 5.6***              |
| Talk with other parents to share experiences             | 3.3                  | 4.9***              |
| Deal with the day-to-day stresses of parenting           | 3.3                  | 4.9***              |
| Understand my goals and values as a parent               | 3.8                  | 5.3***              |

Note. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. \*\*\*Significant results indicate child skills improved after the parenting education series,  $p < 0.05$ . N = 18,208.

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

**Table 4**

**Child Skills Before and After Participation**

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

Note. Dependent t-tests were used to calculate significance levels. \*\*\*Significant results indicate child skills improved after the parenting education series,  $p < 0.05$ . N = 18,208.

From 2010-2017, 25 parent focus groups were facilitated by OSU faculty and graduate students in Hub regions and at Small/Programming Grant project sites. Eighteen were held in English and seven in Spanish. A total of 217 parents have participated in the focus groups. Analysis of the

open-ended questions on the Parenting Skills Ladder and focus group responses supported the quantitative data. Together, they suggested that the vast majority of participants in the programs enjoyed the parenting education programs in which they participated and that they continued to seek out additional opportunities to access similar programs. They shared that they had benefitted from participation both in terms of enhanced parenting skills and strategies as well as improved family dynamics. Qualitative data provided by the parents indicated that they felt more confident in their parenting abilities and were able to take away parenting skills and specific tools to improve communication with their children. They also believed they had a greater knowledge and understanding of child development and age-appropriate behavior, which significantly improved their ability to establish reasonable expectations. Many parents shared that their children enjoyed participating in parenting education child care programs as well. Many Hubs and Programming Grant organizations offered free child care to families participating in parenting education series. Children enjoyed participating in activities, many of which targeted kindergarten readiness or other skills, and socializing with other children.

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

Overwhelmingly, parents were satisfied with their parenting education experiences. Of the 18,208 participants completing the satisfaction section of the Parenting Skills Ladder, 97% reported that the information and resources in the class or home visits were somewhat or very helpful. In addition, 97% of the parents responded that they were likely to recommend the classes to others. Of the 10,077 Parent Workshop Evaluation surveys collected, 97% of the respondents described the workshop materials as somewhat or very helpful. Additionally, 97% reported that they would use the information or resources presented at the workshop a lot or some of the time.

## **Hubs: Increasing Organizational Capacity**

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

lead coordination efforts, and implement parenting education programs. As a result of the OPEC grant, all Hubs have designated positions and FTE devoted to parenting education.

**Table 5**

**Organizational Capacity Numbers 2010-2017**

| Activity                                 | Description                   | Hubs         |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Facilitators Trained In Curricula</b> | OPEC Facilitators Trained     | 918          |
|  | Non-OPEC Facilitators Trained | 896          |
| <b>Professional Development</b>          | Sessions for Facilitators     | 1,123        |
|  | Sessions for OPEC Staff       | 1,416        |
| <b>Advisory Meetings</b>                 | Advisory Board Meetings       | 1,302        |
| <b>Funds Leveraged</b>                   | Funds Leveraged               | \$15,228,517 |
|  | In-Kind Leveraged             | \$5,669,162  |
|  | Total Leveraged               | \$20,897,679 |

Hubs reported that a total of 1,814 facilitators were trained in parenting education curricula during the past seven years using both OPEC funds and partner resources. Hubs further increased their organizational capacity by making professional development opportunities accessible to facilitators and other professional staff, enhancing their communities' ability to offer high-quality programming, and meeting the needs of families.

In addition to paid staff, organizations relied on members of their advisory council or board of directors to assist in determining priorities, meeting their goals and objectives, and providing a degree of oversight for fiscal and other management operations. The advisory councils are diverse in their membership and are representative of the communities being served by the Hubs. Advisory council members have been included in the development of both strategic and sustainability plans for the initiative.

During their first year of funding (and the first year of each expansion), Hubs were required to develop strategic plans that would help strengthen their organizations over time and sustain programs financially into the future. Through strategic planning, Hubs collected input from over 696 parents and 460 community partners to identify strengths and gaps in parenting education

in their Hub regions. These needs assessments helped to determine goals and directions for further development of programs. Hubs continue to use the strategic plans as “road maps” and make updates as needed.

Strategic plans helped to clarify not only priority areas for programming, but also the need for strategies for sustainability. Hubs were required to write sustainability plans during the 2012-2013 program year. Overall, the sustainability plans reflected the Hubs’ understanding of the importance of diversified funding streams. As should be expected, there was not one “silver bullet” tactic for sustainability. Rather, most Hubs identified multiple strategies that built on their strengths, collaborative relationships, and the changing landscape of funding for early childhood and family services. Over the past seven years, Hubs leveraged \$20.9 million in new funds and in-kind donations.

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

**Note for Small/Programming Grant Sites related to Organizational Capacity:** Although non-Hub Programming Grant sites were not required to report on progress related to organizational capacity, many chose to do so because these efforts are seen as critical for high-quality parenting programming. Over the seven years of OPEC funding, Small/Programming Grant sites reported that they had trained a total of 197 facilitators to use evidence-based parenting education curricula. Programming Grant sites also reported leveraging \$2.1 million in new funds and in-kind donations to support their program efforts.

## **Hubs: Increasing Community Collaboration**

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

Hubs used many different methods to recruit parents for participation in parenting education programs. Marketing efforts included newsletters, newspaper articles and ads, radio spots, TV announcements, websites, flyers, community bulletin boards, and social media outlets such as

Facebook. Many Hubs shared that these efforts played an essential role in spreading awareness of their organization and the services provided, however, word of mouth and a “warm handoff” from others continued to be one of the most effective ways to get families in the door to parenting education class series. Hubs also initiated awareness campaigns with targeted messages on topics such as child abuse prevention, the importance of parenting, and normalizing parenting education.

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

Working with local schools can be an effective way to reach and engage families. For OPEC reporting purposes, the definition of school includes preschools, Head Starts, and K-12 schools. Hubs connected their programs with school districts through the location of programs in school facilities, putting announcements and descriptions of parenting education programs in school bulletins and newsletters, and being involved in school events and ongoing activities. During the seven years of the OPEC initiative, 13,777 programs or class sessions have been held in school facilities with an additional 969 programs co-sponsored by schools, but held at other facilities in the community.

Hubs supported parents’ ability to prepare their children for kindergarten through parenting education and positive parent-child interactions as well as activities specifically designed to enhance the home learning environment and to build relationships between families and schools. Hubs encouraged parent efforts to increase their children’s early literacy skills and other school readiness skills by integrating these topics in parenting education series, workshops, or other parent support activities. In addition, Hubs offered or participated in workshops, parent-child interaction groups, or family activities focused on the transition to kindergarten.

From 2010-2017, a total of 457 community partners provided information about the parenting education collaboration in their Hub regions through an online survey or focus group.

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

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

Partners agreed that the perceptions of parenting education in their community have changed as a result of current program efforts including a reduced stigma and an increased value associated with parenting education. An impressive 98% of the community partners agreed that the parenting education program is benefiting families.

## **Lessons Learned**

Over the seven years of the OPEC initiative, OPEC Hubs and Programming Grant organizations have shared lessons learned. These lessons learned reflect both successes as well as challenges, including those that have been overcome and those that are ongoing. Lessons learned shared by OPEC grantees include the following:

- Parenting education is a community need and recognition of this need continues to grow.
- Normalizing parenting education and recruiting families requires creativity.
- Each community has different strengths and different needs.
- Building relationships with partners is foundational to effectively supporting children and families and essential for a lasting initiative.
- Providing access to professional development leads to higher-quality programming.
- It's important to take time to celebrate successes – large and small.
- Change takes time.

Each of these lessons learned is addressed with greater depth in the 2016-2017 OPEC Evaluation Report.

## **Summary**

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