

PARTNERS



for children & families

# Partners for Children & Families

*Leading the state and local communities in improving the well-being of Oregon's children and families*

SALEM, OREGON ■ SPRING 2004

## OVERVIEW

Senate Bill 555, adopted by the Oregon Legislature in 1999, stated that "communities provide the context for healthy children and families, and strong families and healthy communities are interdependent."

To support this focus on safe and healthy children, families, and communities, the legislation directed state agencies and local communities to plan together for programs that address the needs, strengths and assets of children and families.

Through this joint planning process, communities have been developing and strengthening partnerships to improve programs – prevention, intervention, treatment and aftercare – for children ages 0-18 and their families. As a result, each of Oregon's 36 counties now has a local coordinated comprehensive plan that:

- Creates positive outcomes for children and families,
- Mobilizes citizens to be engaged in their communities, and
- Coordinates programs, strategies and services among community groups, government agencies, private providers and other parties.

In addition, SB 555 required that agencies evaluate programs and services included in the plan using a consistent evaluation framework based on the Oregon Benchmarks.

## AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS

In 2001, a companion piece of legislation was passed, expanding on SB 555. HB 3659 or The Oregon Children's Plan, represents a comprehensive investment policy for Oregon's youngest children and their families beginning with first-born children.

The bill has three primary policy elements:

## PCF Accomplishments

- Developed a comprehensive, coordinated process – a systemic plan that includes a number of different supports at the state and community level.
  - Agreed on a concept of state oversight with local "freedom" to implement – working together, local "ownership."
  - Provided collaborative technical assistance in training teams.
  - Facilitated regional "conversations" to engage county commissioners.
  - Agreed on common terminology.
  - Detailed guidelines, training and technical assistance on gender appropriate & culturally competent services and developed a common assessment tool.
  - Partnered with National Crime Prevention Council to secure funding opportunities.
  - Combined Juvenile & OYA Diversion funds into a single contract.
  - Developed a PCF Steering Committee work plan.
  - Produced a Phase II comprehensive planning guideline.
  - Agreed on planning principles among DHS, ODE, OCCF, JCP, OYA.
  - Agreed to use policy development as the vehicle to drive service coordination.
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- It defines the goals and essential elements of an early childhood system of supports.
  - It defines coordinated state and local responsibilities within the early childhood system.
  - It builds on existing programs and links them into a coordinated and comprehensive system.

OREGON PCF FACT SHEET

Implementation of this legislation has occurred in three phases:

**Phase I**, 2000-2001, involved a local inventory or "mapping" of strengths, gaps, and barriers in services and supports.

In **Phase II**, 2001-2002, each county agreed on a common vision for children and families, analyzed data reflecting their current status, and agreed on priorities and strategies to move them towards their vision. This information was collected into a *State Plan for Children and Families*, published in fall of 2002.

In **Phase III**, 2002-2003, counties continued to add new partners and refine their plans. As of July 2003, county plans are in place for six years, and funds from state agencies are allocated based on these plans.

## LOCAL DECISION MAKING

One of our state's greatest assets is the dedication and imagination of community members to find new approaches to serving people and solving problems. In implementing Senate Bill 555, a key objective has been to leverage and coordinate those strengths. To achieve the broadest possible representation of

viewpoints and expertise, local commissions on children and families facilitate a process that involves government, business, schools, parents and students in developing the local coordinated comprehensive plan. Community organizations participating in the process represent child- and family-serving agencies, schools, parents, students, business leaders, the faith community and higher education. The process also must include representatives of diverse populations.

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**L**ocal decision making about State services is every county commissioner's dream. Comprehensive planning involving community service providers, advocates and other citizens is the way to be sure that the needs of children and families are being addressed using best practices to achieve measurable results.

- Ben Boswell  
Wallowa County Commissioner

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## PCF MOVING AHEAD

In November of 2003, Governor Kulongoski unveiled his "Children's Charter for Oregon," which builds on previous efforts. The Charter calls on Oregonians to help ensure that:

- Every child in Oregon is safe and healthy, and has adequate food and shelter,
- Every younger child in Oregon is ready to enter school, and
- Every older child in Oregon graduates from high school and is ready to join the workforce or go on to college.

The PCF planning process is affording the state the opportunity to reach higher levels of effective services through partnerships that recognize common goals and interrelated efforts. This is occurring despite a significant decline in tax revenues at all levels of government. Oregonians are "doing more with less" under the shared goal of maintaining and improving services to those in need.

### PCF Steering Committee

- Association of Oregon Community Mental Health Programs
- Department of Community Colleges & Workforce Development
- Department of Human Services
- Governor's Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse Programs
- Oregon Criminal Justice Commission Juvenile Crime Prevention Advisory Committee
- Oregon Department of Education
- Oregon Housing & Community Services
- Oregon Juvenile Directors Association
- Oregon Progress Board
- Oregon Youth Authority
- State and Local Commissions on Children & Families

*In partnership with local governments, tribal governments, service providers, educators, the private sector, citizens and youth in Oregon's 36 counties*

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