

Children at Risk, Early Learning, Early Intervention

Discussion Guide and Consensus Questions

Local Leagues: The study was sent e-version to those with emails listed at the state office. Those without listed emails received a mailed version (p1-23). You will also find the study online at: <http://voteoregon.org/children-at-risk/>

Please read the study if you can, then answer these questions.

Your input on the questions below will help LWVOR update Positions on Children at Risk, Early Childhood, and Early Learning. Key "excerpts" from the LWVOR-EF Study follow with questions for you to consider.

"Before beginning school, 90% of all of Oregon's children will have seen a medical professional and 60% will show up in a daycare setting, **yet only 32% of children under age 6 received a developmental screening to identify opportunities for early intervention with developmental delays** in health, social and emotional, or other age-appropriate skill attainment. Experts say ninety percent of brain development takes place by 3-4 years of age. Young children form 85% of their intellect, personality and social skills by age five. Early learning experiences have a life-long impact." (p 3)

1. Should LWVOR Advocate for legislation, policies and funding for:

- a. Early screening (physical, dental, mental capacity and behavioral) for all children?
___ Support ___ Oppose ___ Not decided because: _____
- b. Providing support in a family setting with home visiting, parenting classes, respite care?
___ Support ___ Oppose ___ Not decided because: _____
- c. Opportunities for children to have affordable, quality child care?
___ Support ___ Oppose ___ Not decided because: _____
- d. All pre-school children to be provided early literacy and pre-school programs?
___ Support ___ Oppose ___ Not decided because: _____
- e. At risk children to be enrolled in Crisis Relief Nurseries or Head Start Programs?
___ Support ___ Oppose ___ Not decided because: _____

Many definitions of Children "At Risk" exist. For this study (p 2) we use the definition found in a 2012 Oregon law. "At-risk child" means a child who is at risk of not entering school ready to learn due to factors including, but not limited to:

- a. Living in a household that is at or near poverty, as determined under federal poverty guidelines;
- b. Living in inadequate or unsafe housing;
- c. Having inadequate nutrition;
- d. Living in a household where there is significant or documented domestic conflict, disruption or violence;
- e. Having a parent who suffers from mental illness, who engages in substance abuse or who experiences a developmental disability or an intellectual disability;
- f. Living in circumstances under which there is neglectful or abusive care-giving;
- g. Having unmet health care and medical treatment needs; and
- h. Having a racial or ethnic minority status that is historically consistent with disproportionate overrepresentation in academic achievement gaps or in the systems of child welfare, foster care or juvenile or adult corrections." (ORS 2013 Edition Chapter 37, Section 12).

2. First, in general do you “support” or “oppose” the following concepts. Second, given that funding may be limited, number the TOP FIVE (a-j) areas where funding might be prioritized. Finally, if consensus is not reached in your discussion, please indicate why you are “not decided” using more space as needed. Should LWV:

a. Support programs that assist parents in job training and education to reduce poverty?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

b. Advocate for access to affordable, stable housing?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

c. Advocate for nutrition and food access for vulnerable families and children?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

d. Advocate for services that reduce domestic conflict, disruption and violence within families?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

e. Support programs for mental health and addictions treatment for parents?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

f. Advocate for comprehensive services for those with developmental and intellectual disability?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

g. Advocate for intervention services that support families to reduce neglectful, abusive care-giving?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

h. Advocate for early intervention and ongoing health care for children (physical, mental, dental)?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

i. Advocate to strengthen evidence based practices in child welfare and foster care?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

j. Advocate for policies and legislation to reduce racial or ethnic minority status inequities?

___Support ___ Oppose

Not decided because: _____

The new Early Learning Division, which is functionally within the Oregon Department of Education but under the directive of the Early Learning Council and the Oregon Education Investment Board, is charged with the broad mission (p 10) to assure:

- A. All children are ready for kindergarten and reading in 3rd grade
- B. Children are raised in stable and attached families, and
- C. Resources and services are integrated statewide.

3. When considering services for Children at Risk, Early Learning, Early Intervention:

a. What are the roles of state and local governments and the private sector?

b. What services should be priorities?

c. How should Oregonians pay for an increase in services that especially target children most at risk while also balancing budget needs for other areas of education?