



## **BACKGROUND**

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For more information, contact:  
Paige Siegall  
Director of Public Relations  
(425) 314-3183  
[psiegall@uoregon.edu](mailto:psiegall@uoregon.edu)

### Early Childhood CARES Backgrounder

Early Childhood CARES is an organization dedicated to providing early intervention and early childhood special education services to infants, toddlers and preschool children in Lane County. The organization serves over 1300 children with developmental delays or disabilities each year. Early Childhood CARES was founded in September of 1992 and still strives to provide top-notch intervention and special education services to children.

### **EARLY CHILDHOOD CARES MISSION STATEMENT:**

Early Childhood CARES mission is to provide quality early intervention and early childhood special education services to children throughout Lane County.

### **FUNDING:**

Early Childhood CARES is funded by the Oregon Department of Education with state and federal dollars. It is one of nine programs in Oregon. All provided educational services are free to eligible children and their families. Kappa Kappa Gamma provides donations that aid in the supplies and opportunities the children are provided with.

### **VALUES:**

Early Childhood CARES embraces detailed values when working with families. The following values encompass the organization.

**Family Centered and Flexible:** The services provided are individualized to meet each child and family's needs. Families are involved in every aspect of programs and services, including the decisions for their child.

**Seamless System:** There is one system for children from birth through five years.

**Collaboration and Teamwork:** Parents and professions plan and work together to ensure team members develop trust and respect and learn from each other.

**Interagency Planning and Service Delivery:** Common values, goals, outcomes and strategies are emphasized. Services are coordinated to integrate and maximize resources.

**Community-based Services in Natural Settings:** Educational services are provided where children can be most successful. Existing community services and programs are available to support all children and families as close to home as possible. Children from rural areas are served in their own communities.

**High Quality Services and Personnel:** Personnel have teaching licenses or state authorization to teach young children. Specialists in early intervention/early childhood special education, speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, behavior and autism are available. Staff receives ongoing training and implement their best practices as services and outcomes are regularly evaluated.

**Inclusive Services and Attitudes:** Children with and without special needs learn together so everyone benefits. All families are treated with honor and respect.

## **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES:**

Early Childhood CARES has many different educational options for young children, including home visits, parent-toddler classes, community preschools, specialized preschool classrooms, and speech therapy in either group or community preschools. The organization's goal is to provide the child's educational services in the "least restrictive" or most typical setting and as close to home as possible. Related services are additionally offered. These include occupational and physical therapy, speech and language therapy, autism, behavior, augmentative communication and audiology. Related services are provided to children based on individual educational needs. They are provided in conjunction with other specialized services.

## **COMMUNITY PARTNERS:**

In addition to the donations received from Kappa Kappa Gamma, Early Childhood CARES utilizes the expertise of the community and funds four community programs to provide educational services. These programs include The Early Education Program, Eugene Hearing and Speech Center, The Relief Nursery and Lane Regional Program for children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Early Childhood CARES has made amazing community connections and benefits greatly

from the donations gathered through events such as Kappa Kappa Gamma's Dodgeball Tournament.

Information gathered from <http://earlychildhoodcares.uoregon.edu/>

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