

Summer Newsletter

Child Care Resource & Referral of Douglas, Klamath, & Lake Counties

July - September 2026



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A Note from the Director

As we move into this season of growth and reflection, I find myself feeling especially grateful for the work we are doing together to support children, families, and early learning professionals across our region.

Recently, we had the honor of celebrating the Douglas County Commissioners proclamation recognizing Provider Appreciation Day and the essential role of child care in our communities. This acknowledgement is more than symbolic—it reflects the growing understanding that child care is the backbone of healthy families, a thriving workforce, and a strong local economy. It is also a powerful reminder that the work you do each day matters deeply and deserves to be seen and valued.

I am also excited to share that our team continues to grow with the addition of two new staff members, Daniella and Markelle. We are thrilled to welcome them to Care Connections & Education. Each brings energy, compassion, and a strong commitment to supporting providers and families. As they step into their roles, I know they will be wonderful partners in strengthening our services and deepening our connections across the communities we serve. Read more about them in this newsletter!

Most importantly, I want to take a moment to recognize you—the child care providers who show up every day with dedication, patience, and heart. Your work is complex and impactful in ways that are often unseen. You support children through big emotions and challenging behaviors. You nurture learning through everyday moments—helping children take those important first “baby steps” in social, emotional, and cognitive development. You create environments where children feel safe, loved, and valued. And you provide a vital support system for families who depend on you not just for care, but for partnership and trust. This work is not easy. It requires resilience, creativity, and deep commitment. And yet, you continue to show up—building relationships, solving problems, and creating spaces where children can truly thrive. Please know that your efforts do not go unnoticed. They are deeply appreciated, and they are making a difference in the lives of children, families, and our entire community.

On behalf of all of us at Care Connections & Education, thank you for the work you do each and every day. We are honored to support you.



Heather Freiling
CCR&R Coordinator
Douglas Education Service District

Meet Our Newest Team Members!



Markelle Owens

As the Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultant, Markelle has a strong commitment to supporting children, families and providers within the community she has called home for most of her life. With a background rooted in trauma informed care, she has dedicated her career to working with children who have experienced adversity and helping create environments where they can heal, grow and thrive. Markelle combines Academic knowledge with compassionate, community centered practice to support healthy early development and emotional well-being.



Daniela Cardenas

I am thrilled to join Douglas ESD, Child Care Resource & Referral as an Administrative Assistant. I bring experience in the learning education field, having previously worked as a Teacher's Aide and as a Spanish instructor for GED classes. Yes, I speak Spanish! I really love education, both pedagogical and andragogical. I have a degree in Early Childhood Education and over the years I have expanded my expertise into adult education as well as Montessori education for young children. I believe education is the best way to change the world, and I want to do my part.



MASTER TRAINING

Online Series for Early Childhood Educators & Care Providers

Register Today!

Set 3 training designed for experienced child care providers (3+ years in the field) at Step 8 or higher on the Oregon Registry. 2.5 hr sessions each month.

July - September: Leadership Development for Early Educators

Register for all 3 Trainings for just \$80.



Heidi McGowan

July 8, August 12 & Sept 9

This interactive workshop for early childhood educators is grounded in Dare to Lead™ by Brené Brown and other research-based leadership frameworks. Participants will explore how courage, vulnerability, trust-building, and values-driven leadership strengthen team culture, improve communication, and support positive outcomes for children and families.

Through practical tools, reflective exercises, and real-world scenarios from early learning environments, educators will develop skills to lead with clarity, foster brave spaces, and navigate difficult conversations. Attendees will leave with actionable strategies to build stronger teams and create thriving organizations.

Register today for Heidi's sessions:

Cost is \$40 and includes 7.5 hrs of Set 3 training - or register for all 3 remaining training quarters (July-March) and get 22.5 hrs of Set 3 training for \$80.



[Register Here!](#)



DOUGLAS • KLAMATH • LAKE

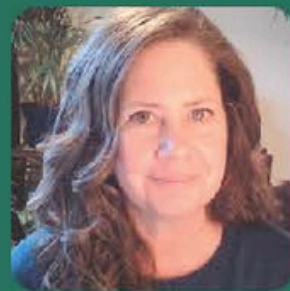
Child Care Resource & Referral

541-672-CARE



Dr. Amy King
Advanced Practice in Early Childhood Behavior Support

October - December
10/21 - 11/18 - 12/9



Dr. Sally Guyon
Advanced Study of Infant/Toddler Development

January-March
1/13 - 2/10 - 3/10

SAVE *the* DATE

2026 Early Childhood Care & Education Conference

Belonging Begins Here!

Classroom Community *with* The Play Coaches

Building Connection, Regulation, and Belonging

Build stronger classroom communities through intentional relationships, responsive environments, and consistent practices that help children feel safe, connected, and ready to learn. This session explores practical strategies to support regulation, foster belonging, strengthen peer relationships, and create predictable routines in both center-based and home settings—helping reduce challenging behaviors and creating spaces where every child and adult feels seen, supported, and connected.



1140 Umpqua College Rd. Roseburg, OR 97471 umpqua.edu/cwt 541-440-4668 cwtoperations@umpqua.edu

Klamath Falls Early Childhood Conference

The Klamath Falls Chapter of the Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children will **NOT** be presenting the Early Childhood Conference in Fall of 2026.

Please check for available training options through Care Connections and Education (672care.org).

Moving forward, the Chapter will be supporting a conference in the Fall of 2027. Please check back periodically on their website, klamath-oraeyc.org, for updated information. We welcome your suggestions and support.

Klamath Falls Highlights



Spring Fling Quotes

“Thank you for being engaging and personal so I can make meaningful connections with the material.”

“Excelente capacitación, muy interesante.”

Courageous Care Quotes

“I appreciate the effort and care given for the topic”

“Thank you. I love your training and advice! I want to take more trainings with you.”

Douglas County Highlights



Spring Fling Quotes

“Thank you for talking and sharing your experience and knowledge on the topic”

“She was amazing - love the passion and excitement!”

“It’s too bad we can’t all find our niche like Sharron has! Thank you, I really enjoyed your energy and information.”

[Click Here](#) to watch a short video from Spring Fling!

Proclamation Day

[View Proclamation](#)

[View Press Release](#)

[View Flyer](#)



A Year of Dedication and Impact

As the 2025–2026 school year ends, Preschool Promise programs across South Central Oregon are celebrating a year defined by dedication, collaboration, and meaningful growth. Across Douglas, Klamath, and Lake counties, the impact of this work is clear—driven by hardworking teaching teams and committed administrators who continue to support early learning in their communities.

Throughout the region, you as educators, have created welcoming and inclusive classrooms where children built essential skills in early literacy, social-emotional development, and critical thinking. Teaching teams demonstrated remarkable adaptability, responding to the unique strengths and challenges of each county from more rural and remote areas to larger communities—while maintaining a strong focus on high-quality instruction and care.

Administrators played an equally vital role, guiding programs with thoughtful leadership and a deep commitment to excellence. Their efforts to support staff through professional development, ensure program quality, and strengthen partnerships with families and local organizations have helped create stable, responsive programs across Douglas, Klamath, and Lake counties.

Collaboration has been a cornerstone of success throughout our region. Despite geographic distances, our Community of Practices focused on program support shared resources, problem-solved challenges, and celebrated milestones. Family engagement remained a priority, with staff fostering strong, trusting relationships that extend learning beyond the classroom and into the home in very creative ways!

The results of this collective effort are evident. Children are leaving Preschool Promise programs confident, curious, and better prepared for kindergarten and beyond—equipped with the foundational skills they need to succeed.

As this school year concludes, we recognize and celebrate the educators and leaders who make this work possible every day. Their dedication continues to strengthen Preschool Promise across Douglas, Klamath, and Lake counties and ensures a bright future for the region's youngest learners.

Your Preschool Promise Team



Heather Freiling
CCR&R Program Director/PSP Lead



**Preschool
Promise**
Oregon Department of
Early Learning and Care



Dani McKiddy
PSP Facilitator
Douglas



Nicole Martin
PSP Facilitator
Douglas



Melisa Miner
PSP Facilitator
Klamath



Terri Lawrence
PSP Facilitator
Klamath



This Spring Term, the ECE Cohort remains strong with 45 students. Congratulations to our 2025-2026 Graduates: Kathey Dennis, Yvon Bernal de Webber, Maria Rosario Ramirez, Briane Gillam, April Elliot, Samantha Baimbridge, Fatemah Gaedecke, Frances Sanchez, Fatemah Jennaty, Sheila Ullom, Kajol Thomas and Tyler Minnis. Great work, you did it!!! The ECE Cohort is continuing to grow—and we're welcoming new cohort members!

- Registration for Summer and Fall term Now Open!
- Summer Term begins Monday, July 6th
- Fall Term begins Monday, September 14th

If you're looking to join a supportive, motivated community of future early childhood professionals, now is the perfect time to jump in! Reach out for more information about how to get started. If you are looking to continue or start your college education in Early Childhood Education, email me at cherry.camonayan@umpqua.edu and we can assess how the cohort can assist with your UCC journey.



Summer is finally here! As we wrap up the school year, we are proud to celebrate the 47 students enrolled in the ECE program. Of those students, 10 are graduating and 14 are earning their Pathway Certificates—congratulations to all!

It has been a pleasure watching your growth, dedication, and hard work throughout the year. Our community will greatly benefit from your knowledge, passion, and expertise in the field of Early Childhood Education.

While summer brings a well-deserved break for many of us, ECE classes at KCC will continue to be active. Summer and fall enrollment are happening now. The summer term begins June 29, and the fall term begins September 28. We look forward to continuing to support your educational journey!

By joining the ECE Cohort, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Earn your degree debt-free
- Build a strong network of professionals in your field
- Receive guidance on your professional development journey
- Gain support as you navigate your coursework at KCC

If you're interested in starting or continuing your journey in Early Childhood Education, email me at amber.singh@douglassesd.k12.or.us. I'd love to chat about how the cohort can support your path to success at KCC!

Infant Toddler Network

New Cohort Starting
Sept. 17, 2026!



Early educators that seek to implement and sustain best practice know that it takes commitment and intentionality. The good news is that you do not have to do this alone. Focused Child Care Networks are relationship-based cohorts designed to support early educators as they strive to provide the highest quality care for young children. A Network builds on the strengths of the individuals participating while connecting them to regular professional development, mentoring, technical assistance, peer learning and consultation visits in their environments.



By joining the Infant Toddler Focused Child Care Network, it is an opportunity for early educators to work together within a supportive group to strengthen best practices in early relational care. A Network is comprised of a group of up to 15 early educators working together with an Infant Toddler Specialist over the course of a 24-month period.

Expectations:

- Attend monthly meetings.
- Participate and actively interact during meetings
- Meet once on one once a month with the Infant Toddler Program Facilitator



Interested in learning more?

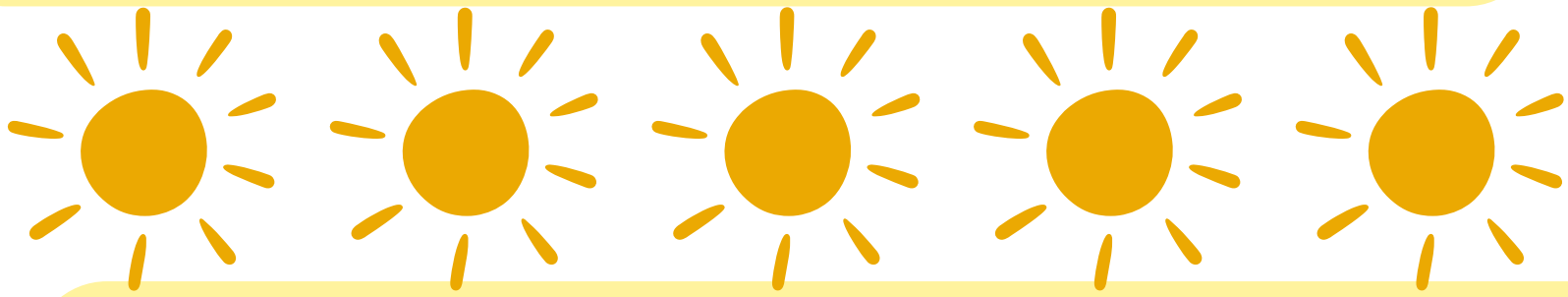
Theresa Songer-Tuckey

541.492.6607

theresa.songer-tuckey@douglasesd.k12.or.us

Douglas County Childcare Directors Cohort

The Directors Cohort had the unique opportunity to partner with Heidi McGowan and participate in a newly developed leadership training focused on Dr. Brene Brown's Dare to Lead and Strong Ground books. Through this experience, directors strengthened their leadership practices while building meaningful connections with peers across the region. The cohort continues to gather at one another's programs, creating opportunities to share ideas, celebrate successes, and learn from each other's environments. This term, visits included Wildflower Preschool and Childcare, Miss Ann's Kiddie Korner, and Umpqua Wonders Academy. The Directors Cohort also expanded to 15 members this year as they welcomed Camus Mauro from Phoenix Early Learning Center into the group.



Spanish Cohort Relaunch: Connection, Learning, and Support

We are excited to announce that our Spanish Cohort is starting back up! This cohort is open to all Spanish-speaking in-home child care providers and program owners who are interested in growing, connecting, and building a stronger network of support within the early childhood community.

Monthly meetings will offer a welcoming space to come together for dinner, hands-on activities, training opportunities, and meaningful discussion. Each gathering is designed to support professional growth while also strengthening connections to local resources, community partners, and one another.

Participants will have the opportunity to collaborate, share experiences, and build relationships with other providers who understand the joys and challenges of early childhood care. The cohort is focused on both learning and community—creating a space where providers feel supported, valued, and connected.

Meeting dates and times are to be determined (TBD). Invitations will be sent out soon with more details.

If you are interested in joining the Spanish Cohort, please contact:

Trudy Willhite at 541-492-6630 (EN) or Daniela Cardenas (541) 492-6610 (SP)

FFF Grant Updates & Opportunities

The Rural Early Learning Facility Improvement Project continues to create meaningful, long-term impacts on the availability and quality of child care across Coos, Curry, Douglas, Klamath, and Lake counties. This initiative, administered by The Research Institute (TRI) at Western Oregon University, supports child care providers in strengthening and expanding their programs.

Grant Opportunities

Child care programs may apply for funding to support one or more of the following goals:

- **Become Licensed:** Support for new or currently unlicensed programs working toward licensure (up to \$15,000)
- **Preservation & Enhancement:** Improve safety and quality of indoor and/or outdoor environments while maintaining current capacity (up to \$15,000)
- **Expansion:** Increase licensed capacity to serve more children (up to \$25,000) Programs may reapply every two years, as long as funding remains available.

Local Impact

Since launching in 2023, this funding opportunity has supported providers across our region with a total of \$448,605 awarded. Of that:

- Douglas County: \$152,283
- Klamath County: \$61,714
- Lake County: \$25,000

Providers have used these funds to make impactful improvements such as:

- Installing new flooring, windows, doors, and roofing
- Upgrading playground equipment and fencing
- Purchasing appliances and program materials
- Enhancing safety with deck repairs and railings
- Adding heating and cooling systems

These improvements are helping create safer, more enriching environments for children and families throughout our communities.

Apply Today

If it has been more than two years since your last award—or if you are:

- Working toward becoming licensed
- Planning to increase your capacity
- Needing safety or quality upgrades

This grant is a valuable opportunity to support your program's growth and sustainability. There is no application deadline; however, funding is available until all funds are awarded.

Learn More

See the resources page for grant guidebooks. For additional information or to review the grant guidelines contact:



Michelle Bassett

Michelle.Bassett@douglasesd.k12.or.us

Inclusive Partners

Tip of the Term



Making Sense of Sensory Needs- For some children, everyday experiences can feel overwhelming. Bright lights, loud noises, busy spaces, certain textures, or too much stimulation can overwhelm a child’s sensory system and lead to “big behaviors” like crying, yelling, running away, shutting down, or difficulty calming. Other children may seek extra sensory input through jumping, spinning, crashing, or constant movement. These behaviors are often connected to sensory needs, not defiance.

Sensory processing plays a big role in self-regulation. When children are overstimulated or under-stimulated, it can affect their ability to focus, communicate, manage emotions, and participate successfully.

Sensory supports benefit all children because every child learns and regulates differently. When adults view behavior through a sensory lens, they can respond with patience, flexibility, and support—helping children feel safe, regulated, and ready to learn.

Join us on June 25th to learn more about supporting sensory needs! [Click here](#) for information



Stephanie Cravalho
541.492.6614
Douglas County



Trudy Willhite
541.492.6630
Klamath/Lake County



Every Child Belongs

Oregon Department of
Early Learning and Care

Every Child Belongs (ECB) Program is committed to supporting young children with social-emotional and behavioral needs in early learning settings throughout Douglas, Klamath and Lake Counties. Through consultation, coaching, and individualized planning, we work collaboratively to promote positive behavior, strengthen social-emotional development, and support successful inclusion in early learning and childcare settings.

What We Offer

- ✓ Center consultation and observation
- ✓ Individualized behavior support planning
- ✓ Social-emotional strategy development
- ✓ Resource connection and referral guidance

Don't hesitate to reach out! We are here to support you.
541.492.6614

www.everychildbelongs.org
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

ECB Connect is our quick-access support system. If you have concerns about a child's behavior or social-emotional development ECB Connect offers a brief consultation, problem-solving and guidance on next steps. ECB Connect is designed to provide timely, responsive support so that challenges can be addressed early and effectively. If you are unsure whether a child may need more formal support, ECB Connect is a great first step.

Resources

DELC Resources

[Provider Updates](#)

[Provider Resources](#)

[Resource Documents](#)

Grant Information

[Summer 2026 Grant Opportunities](#)

[Ford Guidebook](#)

[WIIN Guidebook](#)

Community Resources

[Douglas Resource Directory](#)

[Klamath/Lake Resource Directory](#)

[Klamath/Lake Spanish Resource Directory](#)

[Take Root](#)

[DC Library Calendar](#)

[Klamath Library Calendar](#)

[Lake Events Calendar](#)

[Air Quality and Outdoor Activity Guidance](#)

Training Resources

[Oregon Center for Career Development](#)

[Pyramid Model eModules](#)

[Training Bulletin](#)



Summer Hours

Open Mon-Fri 8:00am - 4:30pm

*Closed Fridays in July & August 7th

Closures

Fourth of July Holiday - July 6

Labor Day - September 7

How can we help?

- Connect to Oregon's Early Learning Systems
- Technical Assistance and Referrals to Extra Supports
- Navigate Licensing/DHS

- Program Quality Improvement
- Cohort and Coaching Opportunities
- Connect to Professional Development and Higher Education



541-672-CARE

672care.org