

## **Morrow County School District Early Learning Initiatives Report:**

During the last three school years Morrow County School District has been intent and driven to ensure we get all students to graduate, to ensure students enroll in postsecondary education, whether that's represented by a certificate in a skilled occupation, an associate's degree, a baccalaureate, or a graduate or professional degree.

During the last two school years, all kindergarten students who entered Oregon public schools were required to complete an early screener assessment – the Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (KRA) – that focused on students' abilities as it relates to early math, early literacy skills. After getting to know their students, kindergarten teachers were also asked to complete a rating scale based on the students' social-emotional development, approaches to learning, and self-regulation.

### **Some findings in the Morrow County KRA results (total kindergarten population):**

- **Kindergarteners come into school having on or above average self-regulation and interpersonal skills as compared with the statewide average.**
- **Kindergarteners come into school with below average number and operation skills as compared with the statewide average (early math tests focus on understanding shapes, measurements, recognizing patterns and sequence numbers).**
- **Kindergarteners come into school significantly below average in letter name and letter sound literacy skills as compared with the statewide average (letter name tests measure a student's ability to name the letters of the alphabet, in both lower and upper case forms, and the letter sound test measures a student's ability to produce common sounds associated with the alphabet).**

Morrow County School District (MCSD) has made it a focus to improve our ability to get kids "Ready for School". Our focus has been to support increased parent education courses, increased collaboration with county regional wellness and safety organizations as well as increased early learning collaboration with county head starts, regional pre-school programs, and private childcare providers. In the last two school years MCSD has focused on the following:

- **Worked with IMESD, private childcare and public childcare providers to develop and align curriculum resources that support early childhood education; we have had several primary educators work with a region wide PLC to support curriculum alignment and instructional practices.**
- **MCSD has implemented Ready for Kinder classes district wide for at least 70 families with children ages 3, 4, 5.**
- **MCSD has partnered with Umatilla Morrow Head Start to offer more parent involvement events such as Nurturing Parenting, Parent Café, Cooking Matters, the READY program, Learning Picnics, etc. within each community in Morrow County School District.**
- **MCSD recently received a grant for over \$50,000 to support an Early Learning Care Coordinator that will help us organize and carryout all of the above as well as support birth to 8 year old families that need access to coordinated care services within Morrow County School District.**

Through Collaboration with Umatilla Morrow Head Start MCSD Elementary schools are hosting the following early learning/parent involvement events:

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| <p><b>Sam Boardman Elementary</b></p> <p>Parent Cafe</p> <p>Making Parenting a Pleasure</p> <p>Learning Picnics</p> <p>READY For Kindergarten</p> <p>I CAN (What To Do When Your Child Gets Sick)</p> | <p><b>A.C. Houghton Elementary</b></p> <p>Learning Picnics</p> <p>READY For Kindergarten</p> <p>Nurturing Parenting</p> <p><b>Morrow Education Center</b></p> <p>Cooking Matters</p> | <p><b>Heppner Elementary</b></p> <p>Nurturing Parenting</p> <p>READY For Kindergarten</p> <p>Learning Picnics</p> <p><b>Morrow County Fairgrounds Annex Kitchen—Heppner</b></p> <p>Cooking Matters</p> |
| <p><b>Windy River Elementary</b></p> <p>Cooking Matters</p> <p>Money Smart</p>  |  |  |

**Nurturing Parenting:**

Nurturing Parenting is a family-centered program designed to build nurturing parenting skills as an alternative to abusive and neglecting parenting and child-rearing practices. The programs feature activities to foster positive parenting skills and self-nurturing, home practice exercises, family nurturing time, and activities to promote positive brain development in children birth to 18 years. Lessons can be delivered in a home-based setting, group-based setting, or combination of home and group settings.

**Parent Café:**

The Parent Cafe Model is a kit based program that ensures agencies and communities have the materials and process needed to have meaningful conversations that strengthen families. The overall focus is parent engagement that recognizes and affirms parents’ leadership role in their families and in their communities.

Parent Cafés engage parents in meaningful conversations about what matters most – their family and how to strengthen that family by building protective factors. Parent Cafés are focused on building the 5 research based protective factors that mitigate the negative impacts of trauma.

**Cooking Matters:**

Cooking Matters helps families to shop for and cook healthy meals on a budget, Cooking Matters hosts six-week class series, Classes include healthy cooking skills, nutrition education and food budgeting.

**READY! for Kindergarten**

This model program focuses on school readiness. It offers age-appropriate trainings, targets and tools for parents and caregivers of children birth to five years that ensure children success in school and throughout life.

**Money Smart:**

Money Smart is a guide for parents and caregivers of children. The focus is to discuss money throughout a child’s life helps to build a strong foundation for healthy financial habits in the future. Within these pages you will find information, resources, activities, and conversation starters about money to help build that foundation.

**Making Parenting a Pleasure (English/Spanish):**

This program is for parents with children of 0-12 years old. The focus is: Learn how to help your children develop healthy, How to prepare your child to reach success in school, Resources and services available to help your family, and Interact with other parents in the community.

**Learning Picnics:**

Parents, caregivers, and their children are invited to participate. This Program gives children ages 0-6+ a chance to: Have books read to them, Explore literacy centers/stations, Build important Literacy Skills.

Parents and students receive free books, snacks, and activities!