

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES from the Parent Accountability Council (PAC)
of Early Learning Multnomah (ELM)**
– Revised April 20, 2015 –

We are parents from different culturally-specific communities. We know that different communities need different solutions. These principles reflect our common values and will direct the work of ELM.

PRIORITY POPULATION

Focus on children who are called “at risk” but who are really “full of promise”

**We want
all children
to thrive.**

Some families face racism and discrimination. Some families live in poverty. Some families earn enough to put them just above the poverty level but then they don't qualify for needed services. Some families have language barriers and experience lack of respect and low self-esteem. Other families don't have a safe place to live, or they deal with substance abuse, criminal backgrounds and unemployment. These and other factors are often due to systemic and historical reasons.

EQUITY

Make the invisible visible

**We are here.
We are all equal.
See us.
Respect us.**

Families with language and cultural barriers often struggle to communicate with schools and end up isolated and not respected. Make it possible for parents to speak up and then listen to their voices. Figure out what parents need to feel comfortable because some will speak up in a large group and others will talk with a trusted home visitor. Find ways to build trust if you want people to speak up. We need support getting ready for kindergarten. Have people in the school who can speak to us and our children and understand what we say. Find teachers and staff who are from our communities. Welcome us into the schools with respect. Be kind. Add flexibility to meeting times between parents and teachers. Get the right resources to every family. Listen and hear what is in our hearts. We have ideas that you need to see and hear.

PARENT-CENTERED

Nothing about us without us

**We are
raising the children.
We are
your best resource.**

Understand what it's like to be a parent. Understand that we raise our children to be proud of who they are and to be proud of their roots. Get to know us. Partner with us to see the success of our children. Ask us what we need and act on what you hear. We know what is best for our children. Recognize that our lives may be different from yours (for example: we may have many generations and ideas about parenting in one home). Give us social settings so our children can learn how to interact with others and we can learn confidence. Recognize how important we are in how our children turn out. Parents have a critical role in our communities. Come to our homes, and respect us. Learn from us as we learn from you. Include all of our family members. Programs wouldn't exist without us so include us when planning programs and services, doing them, measuring their success, and sharing their success with us. Hear our needs before you proceed.

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Support the family to support the child

**Support us
as we take care
of our children.
Meet us where we are.**

We want to educate ourselves so we can also help educate others and move our communities forward. Provide education for parents and caregivers in the home and out of the home. Caregivers include grandparents and extended family. Offer classes, resources and services in our native languages. Give us the opportunity to learn English. Training needs to be culturally-responsive, in-depth and ongoing. Honor our culture. We are hungry for knowledge and will ask for what we need. We invite you to ask us what we need and want to know. Follow through with commitments to parents. Start early. Don't wait until problems get big. Prevention is as important as intervention.

SYSTEM COORDINATION

Work together to partner with families

**Talk to us.
And talk to each other.
It takes all of us to
make life better for
our children.**

We want better communication between parents and schools. We need to know how our children are doing when they are away from us on a regular basis, especially when our children have learning problems or struggles. We want to work together. Schools should partner with community agencies and parents. People making decisions about our schools and our neighborhoods need to talk to us. Understand the solutions and programs we've already developed and how they help us. Learn from programs that work well in our communities. Use our wisdom. Share the good work that we are doing.