



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Many incoming kindergarteners are missing learning opportunities Kindergarten sign-up started in April**

Hillsboro - Last year, 13 school districts in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook Counties had 687 incoming kindergarteners signed up for school by June 30. By Sept. 1 that number had almost doubled to 1,196. This is an issue that many school districts have; they don't know all of their incoming students until it is too late to offer summer activities to those students.

The sooner schools know a student is going to be joining the incoming kindergarten class, the sooner they can begin building a relationship with them and their family and connect them to summer learning opportunities.

At schools across the Tillamook, Clatsop and Columbia counties, one- to two-week summer kindergarten camps are being offered for free. The camps provide meaningful opportunities for students to adjust to school. Students gain confidence and a clear understanding of what will be expected of them in a kindergarten classroom.

Last summer, the [Northwest Early Learning Hub](#) provided school districts with \$120,750 in grant funds to provide summer kindergarten camps. Four hundred and three students attended the camps across 16 sites.

“Our kinder camp program allows students and parents the opportunity to get to know Liberty before the regular start of the school year,” said Heather Gerlt, a teacher at Liberty Elementary in Tillamook.

Gerlt says the kinder camp teachers report that students who attend the camp are less worried about coming to school. “Their knowledge of the school expectations including how to walk through the lunch line and find the bathrooms really helps set an example for other students at the beginning of the year,” she says.

In order for students to have access to these types of opportunities, they need to be signed up for kindergarten between April and June. Many families don't realize that kindergarten sign-up begins before the previous school year ends.

Families can contact their local elementary school to register their child for kindergarten. They will be asked to show proof of address, an updated immunization record, and the child's birth certificate or alternate ID. Families can visit their local elementary school by June 28 and receive free summer learning resources.

Families who need more information about these opportunities in English or Spanish can call Elena Barreto (Early Learning Community Navigator) at 503-614-1443.

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*The Northwest Early Learning Hub works to ensure that young children and their families in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties have the resources and support to thrive. We are educators, health care providers, community advocates, program providers and businesses who believe we can do more for our communities together than we can on our own. The Northwest Early Learning Hub is embedded within [Northwest Regional Education Service District](#), which is the largest of Oregon's 19 ESDs. NWRESD serves 20 school districts in Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook and Washington counties.*

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