



2026 Regional Strategic Investment Recommendations

Early Learning Hub of
Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties



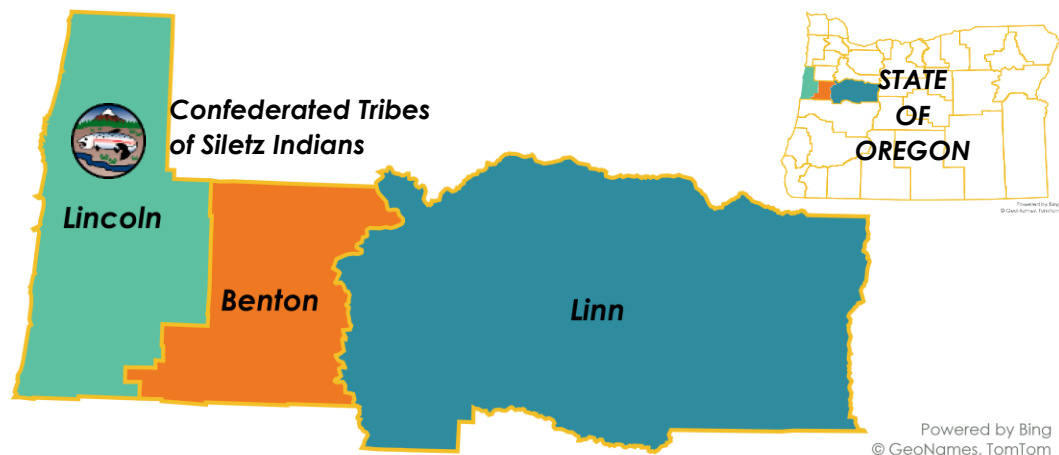
Introduction

Purpose of the Report

The 2026 Regional Strategic Investment Recommendations provide a framework for data-informed investments that improve outcomes for children and families across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. Developed for the Early Learning Hub Governance Council and community partners, this report builds on findings from the 2026 Regional Data Book and the Community Asset Mapping Project to identify county-specific and regional investment priorities that align with Raise Up Oregon 2024–2028 and the Early Learning Hub's strategic plan.

By combining quantitative data with community perspectives, this report identifies opportunities to strengthen early childhood systems, improve family well-being, expand equitable access to services, and support positive outcomes for children and families throughout the region. It is intended to guide strategic planning, resource allocation, and cross-sector collaboration among policymakers, funders, Tribal nations, public agencies, schools, health systems, and community organizations.

Map of the Early Learning Hub Region



Data Sources

The recommendations in this report are informed by two complementary sources of information.

2026 Regional Data Book (Primary Data Source)

The 2026 Regional Data Book serves as the primary evidence base for these recommendations. It provides comprehensive county-level data on

demographics, early care and education, K–12 education, family economic well-being, housing, maternal and child health, behavioral health, and child welfare. These data are used to identify county and regional priorities.

2025 Community Asset Mapping Report (Complementary Community Perspectives)

The 2025 Community Asset Mapping Report complements the Regional Data Book by incorporating community voices, local strengths, service gaps, and priorities identified through community engagement. Because the report focuses on individual communities rather than countywide conditions, its findings provide local context and help validate regional trends. Readers interested in community-specific priorities and recommendations are encouraged to refer to the Investment Recommendations section of the Community Asset Mapping Report.

Together, these two resources provide a balanced foundation for data-informed, community-responsive investment decisions across the Early Learning Hub region.

Regional Challenges at a Glance



Key Findings from the 2026 Regional Data Book

The 2026 Regional Data Book provides a comprehensive overview of the well-being of children and families across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. While each chapter presents unique findings, several common themes emerge across the data. Together, these findings highlight the region's greatest opportunities and challenges and provide the foundation for the strategic investment recommendations presented in this report.

1. Demographic Changes Are Reshaping the Region

Population growth has slowed across the region, while fertility and birth rates continue to decline. At the same time, the population is becoming older and increasingly diverse, particularly among children. These demographic shifts will influence future demand for early learning, schools, health care, housing, workforce development, and family support services.

2. Housing Affordability Continues to Challenge Families

Housing costs continue to outpace income growth for many families. The Data Book shows that many working households struggle to meet basic needs, with affordable housing remaining out of reach for many low- and moderate-income families. Housing instability creates additional challenges for children's health, education, and overall family well-being.

3. Child Care Remains One of the Region's Greatest Needs

Despite ongoing investments, the region continues to experience a shortage of affordable, high-quality child care, particularly for infants and toddlers. Many families face high child care costs relative to their income, while providers continue to experience workforce shortages and limited capacity. Expanding access to affordable, quality child care remains essential for supporting both children's development and family economic stability.

4. Family Economic Pressures Continue to Affect Child Well-Being

Many families continue to experience financial challenges related to income, housing, child care, food, and transportation. Children living in poverty remain disproportionately affected by these pressures, increasing the risk of housing instability, food insecurity, educational barriers, and poorer health outcomes.

5. Educational Opportunities and Outcomes Remain Uneven

Educational opportunities and outcomes continue to vary across districts and student groups. Differences in student poverty, attendance, mobility, class size,



educator capacity, and access to counselors contribute to disparities in academic performance and graduation outcomes. Student Health Survey findings also highlight ongoing concerns about youth mental health and well-being, reinforcing the need for coordinated supports that promote both learning and healthy development.

6. Child and Family Health Outcomes Remain Uneven

The Data Book highlights ongoing challenges in maternal, child, and behavioral health across the region. Declining fertility and birth rates are contributing to demographic change, while disparities in prenatal care, birth outcomes, insurance coverage, and child health persist. Data also point to continuing concerns related to youth mental health, emotional well-being, and family stress, underscoring the importance of prevention, early intervention, and coordinated systems of care.

7. Community Needs Differ Across the Region

Although many challenges are shared across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties, the Data Book reveals important differences in demographic trends, economic conditions, educational outcomes, child care availability, housing affordability, and health indicators. These differences highlight the importance of place-based strategies that recognize the unique strengths, needs, and priorities of individual communities.

Summary

The findings from the 2026 Regional Data Book demonstrate that many of the challenges facing children and families are interconnected. Housing affordability, economic stability, child care access, education, health, and behavioral health influence one another and require coordinated, cross-sector solutions. The following chapters translate these findings into county-specific and regional strategic investment recommendations that aim to strengthen family well-being, improve equitable access to services, and support positive outcomes for children and families across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties.

Linn County Investment Recommendations

County Overview

Linn County continues to experience significant challenges affecting children and families, particularly in its rural communities. Findings from the 2026 Regional Data Book and the Community Asset Mapping Project highlight ongoing concerns related to child care access, family economic stability, educational outcomes, maternal and child health, and child well-being. While the county benefits from a strong network of schools, community organizations, and family-serving agencies, continued investment is needed to reduce disparities and improve equitable access to services.

Key Challenges

Based on findings from the 2026 Regional Data Book, the following investment priorities have been identified for Linn County:

1. **Child Care Access:** Limited availability of affordable, high-quality child care, especially for infants and toddlers, continues to constrain family stability and workforce participation.
2. **Family Economic Stability:** Many families continue to experience poverty, housing cost burdens, and financial hardship, particularly households with young children and single-parent families.
3. **Educational Success:** Student outcomes vary across school districts, with continued challenges related to attendance, academic achievement, student poverty, class size, educator workforce, student mobility, and access to school-based supports.
4. **Health and Well-Being:** Maternal and child health indicators, youth mental health, and behavioral health needs remain areas of concern, highlighting the importance of prevention, early intervention, and coordinated care.
5. **Child Welfare and Family Support:** Higher-than-average rates of child welfare involvement indicate the continued need for family preservation, early intervention, and trauma-informed services.

Recommended Investment Priorities

Priority Area	Recommended Investments
Child Care Expansion	Expand affordable, high-quality child care with an emphasis on infant and toddler care, strengthen the early childhood workforce, and improve program quality.
Family Economic Stability & Housing	Increase housing stability, homelessness prevention, family resource navigation, food security, and employment supports that reduce financial hardship.
Educational Success	Improve early literacy, school readiness, attendance, academic success, and school-based behavioral health through coordinated early childhood and K–12 partnerships.
Health & Family Well-Being	Expand maternal and child health services, behavioral health, developmental screening, early intervention, and youth mental health supports.
Child Welfare & Family Support	Strengthen family preservation, home visiting, parenting education, trauma-informed services, and coordinated family support systems.
System Capacity (Long-Term)	Invest in workforce development, regional data systems, program evaluation, transportation coordination, and community partnerships to build sustainable, family-centered systems.

Key Indicators

The following table presents selected indicators from the 2026 Regional Data Book that inform Linn County's investment priorities.

Indicator	Linn County
Population	130,706
% Rural Population	42.5%
Child Poverty Rate	16.1%
Under-5 Poverty Rate	25.2%
SNAP Participation (Families with Children)	27.5%
Infant/Toddler Child Care Supply Rate	13%
Preschool Enrollment	26.1%
Student Homelessness	4.8%
Children Under 6 Uninsured	3.9%
Teen Birth Rate	14.4 per 1,000
Inadequate Prenatal Care	3.5%
Child Abuse Victim Rate	19.4 per 1,000
Home Price-to-Income Ratio	5.2
Housing Cost Burden Among Owner Households	25.1%
Housing Cost Burden Among Renter Households	49.7%

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (ACS), Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI).

Summary

Linn County's priorities focus on strengthening child care, improving family economic stability, supporting educational success, promoting maternal and child health, and preventing child maltreatment. Coordinated investments across these areas will help reduce disparities, strengthen protective factors, and create more equitable opportunities for children and families throughout the county.



Benton County Investment Recommendations

County Overview

Benton County benefits from strong educational institutions, community partnerships, and a diverse service network. However, the 2026 Regional Data Book and Community Asset Mapping project identify persistent disparities affecting children and families, particularly in rural communities. High housing costs, limited infant and toddler child care, family economic pressures, and unequal access to services continue to create barriers for many families. Strategic investments should build on the county's strengths while improving equitable access to opportunities and supports.

Key Challenges

Based on findings from the 2026 Regional Data Book, the following investment priorities have been identified for Benton County:

1. **Housing Affordability:** High housing costs continue to place financial pressure on families, making it difficult for many working households to secure stable and affordable housing.
2. **Child Care Access:** Although Benton County has greater child care availability than the other counties, shortages remain for infants and toddlers, and the high cost of care continues to burden many families.
3. **Family Economic Stability:** Many families with young children continue to experience financial hardship despite employment, particularly those living below the federal poverty level or within the ALICE population.
4. **Educational Equity:** While overall educational outcomes are relatively strong, disparities persist across districts and student groups. Rural schools continue to face challenges related to student poverty, attendance, educator workforce, and access to specialized supports.
5. **Health and Family Well-Being:** Access to maternal, child, and behavioral health services remains uneven, particularly in rural communities, while youth mental health continues to be an area of concern.



Recommended Investment Priorities

Priority Area	Recommended Investments
Housing Stability & Affordability	Increase affordable housing opportunities, rental assistance, housing stability supports, and homelessness prevention programs for families with young children.
Child Care Expansion	Expand affordable infant and toddler child care, strengthen the early childhood workforce, improve program quality, and reduce financial barriers for families.
Family Economic Stability	Increase family resource navigation, financial stability programs, employment supports, and culturally and linguistically responsive services that strengthen family well-being.
Educational Equity & Student Success	Improve early literacy, school readiness, attendance, academic success, behavioral health, and targeted supports for underserved student groups through coordinated early learning and K–12 partnerships.
Health & Family Well-Being	Expand maternal and child health services, behavioral health, developmental screening, early intervention, and family support programs, particularly in rural communities.
System Capacity (Long-Term)	Invest in workforce development, transportation and rural service access, regional data systems, program evaluation, and community partnerships to strengthen coordinated, family-centered systems.

Key Indicators

The following table presents selected indicators from the 2026 Regional Data Book that inform Benton County's investment priorities.

Indicator	Benton County
Population	96,303
% Rural Population	20.4%
Child Poverty Rate	13.0%
Under-5 Poverty Rate	13.0%
SNAP Participation (Families with Children)	20.8%
Infant/Toddler Child Care Supply Rate	28%
Preschool Enrollment	45.8%
Student Homelessness	3.9%
Children Under 6 Uninsured	2.4%
Inadequate Prenatal Care	2.8%
Median Monthly Rent	\$1,951
ALICE Survival Budget (2 Adults, 2 Children in Care)	\$95,532
Home Price-to-Income Ratio	6.8
Housing Cost Burden Among Owner Households	20.4%
Housing Cost Burden Among Renter Households	58.1%

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (ACS), Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI).

Summary

Benton County's investment priorities focus on reducing disparities while building on the county's existing strengths. Strategic investments in housing, child care, family economic stability, educational equity, health, and culturally responsive services will help ensure that all children and families, particularly those in rural and underserved communities, have equitable opportunities to thrive.

Lincoln County Investment Recommendations

County Overview

Lincoln County faces some of the region's most significant challenges affecting children and families. Geographic isolation, high housing costs, persistent poverty, limited child care capacity, and barriers to accessing services continue to affect family well-being and child outcomes. At the same time, the county benefits from strong community partnerships, Tribal leadership, and a shared commitment to improving opportunities for children and families. Strategic investments should focus on expanding access to services while addressing the underlying conditions that contribute to long-term disparities.

Key Challenges

Based on findings from the 2026 Regional Data Book, the following investment priorities have been identified for Lincoln County:

1. **Family Economic Stability:** Lincoln County continues to experience high levels of child poverty, housing cost burden, and financial hardship, particularly among families with young children.
2. **Housing Affordability and Stability:** Limited affordable housing and high rental costs create ongoing challenges for families and contribute to housing instability.
3. **Child Care Access:** A shortage of affordable, high-quality child care—especially for infants and toddlers—continues to limit opportunities for families and employers.
4. **Educational Success:** Schools continue to face challenges related to academic achievement, attendance, student poverty, homelessness, educator workforce capacity, and access to student supports.
5. **Health and Family Well-Being:** Maternal and child health outcomes, youth mental health, behavioral health needs, and child welfare involvement remain significant concerns, highlighting the need for prevention and coordinated systems of care.

Recommended Investment Priorities

Priority Area	Recommended Investments
Family Economic Stability & Housing	Expand affordable housing, homelessness prevention, rental assistance, family resource navigation, food security initiatives, and employment supports that strengthen family financial stability.
Child Care Expansion	Increase the availability of affordable, high-quality child care, particularly for infants and toddlers, while strengthening the early childhood workforce and improving program quality.
Educational Success & Student Well-Being	Improve early literacy, school readiness, attendance, academic achievement, school-based behavioral health, counseling, and wraparound supports through coordinated early learning and K-12 partnerships.
Health & Family Well-Being	Expand maternal and child health services, behavioral health, developmental screening, early intervention, child abuse prevention, and family preservation programs, particularly in rural and underserved communities.
Transportation & Rural Service Access	Improve transportation, mobile service delivery, and coordinated outreach to reduce barriers to services in rural and coastal communities.
System Capacity (Long-Term)	Invest in workforce recruitment and retention, community infrastructure, regional data systems, cross-sector partnerships, Tribal partnerships, and continuous evaluation to build sustainable, family-centered systems.

Key Indicators

The following table presents selected indicators from the 2026 Regional Data Book that inform Lincoln County's investment priorities

Indicator	Lincoln County
Population	50,964
% Rural Population	59.7%
Child Poverty Rate	21.8%
Under-5 Poverty Rate	33.4%
SNAP Participation (Families with Children)	36.9%
Infant/Toddler Child Care Supply Rate	12%
Student Homelessness	13.1%
Children Under 6 Uninsured	4.7%
Births to Unmarried Mothers	53.7%
Inadequate Prenatal Care	5.3%
Child Abuse Victim Rate	24.7 per 1,000
Foster Care Placement Rate	11.4 per 1,000
Median Monthly Rent	\$1,928
Home Price-to-Income Ratio	7.3
Housing Cost Burden Among Owner Households	26.8%
Housing Cost Burden Among Renter Households	45.5%

Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau (ACS), Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC), Oregon Department of Education (ODE), Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS), Zillow Home Value Index (ZHVI).

Summary

Lincoln County's investment priorities focus on addressing the interconnected challenges of economic stability, housing, child care, education, health, and access to services. Strategic investments that strengthen family supports, expand access to essential services, and build coordinated community systems will help reduce disparities and improve long-term outcomes for children and families throughout the county.

EL Hub Regional Investment Recommendations

Overview

The 2026 Regional Data Book and Community Asset Mapping Project identify several shared challenges affecting children and families across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. While each county has unique strengths and needs, common issues—including child care access, housing affordability, family economic stability, educational disparities, health, and behavioral health—require coordinated regional action.

These recommendations identify strategic investment priorities for the Early Learning Hub region and are intended to guide the Governance Council, policymakers, funders, Tribal partners, public agencies, and community organizations in aligning resources where they can have the greatest impact.

Key Challenges

The following challenges consistently emerge across the region:

1. **Child Care Access:** Affordable, high-quality child care, particularly for infants and toddlers, remains insufficient to meet family needs.
2. **Housing Affordability & Stability:** Rising housing costs continue to affect family stability and increase financial hardship.
3. **Family Economic Stability:** Many families continue to experience financial challenges despite employment.
4. **Educational Success:** Differences in attendance, academic achievement, graduation, and student well-being persist across districts and student groups.
5. **Health & Family Well-Being:** Maternal and child health, youth mental health, and behavioral health remain significant concerns.
6. **Workforce Capacity & Service Access:** Workforce shortages and uneven access to services continue to limit support for children and families.
7. **Regional Disparities:** Conditions vary across counties and communities, requiring both regional collaboration and place-based solutions.

Recommended Investment Priorities

Priority Area	Recommended Investments
Child Care Expansion	Increase infant and toddler child care capacity, strengthen the early childhood workforce, improve quality, and expand affordability for families.
Housing Stability & Family Economic Stability	Expand affordable housing, homelessness prevention, rental assistance, employment supports, family resource navigation, and programs that strengthen financial stability.
Educational Success & School Readiness	Improve early literacy, school readiness, attendance, academic achievement, behavioral health, and coordinated early learning–K–12 partnerships.
Health & Family Well-Being	Expand maternal and child health services, behavioral health, developmental screening, prevention, early intervention, and family support services.
Family Navigation & Cross-Sector Coordination	Improve referral systems, service coordination, and partnerships across health, education, and human services to make services easier for families to access.
System Capacity (Long-Term)	Invest in workforce development, transportation, community infrastructure, Tribal partnerships, regional data systems, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

Connecting Data to Investment Priorities

The Regional Data Book identifies several recurring challenges that directly inform the recommended investment priorities.

Key Findings from the Regional Data Book	Regional Investment Priority
Declining births, changing demographics, and an aging population	Plan for future service delivery, workforce development, and sustainable community infrastructure
Housing affordability continues to challenge families	Expand affordable housing, rental assistance, and homelessness prevention
Infant and toddler child care remains in short supply	Increase child care capacity, affordability, and workforce development
Many families continue to experience economic hardship	Strengthen family economic supports, resource navigation, and employment opportunities
Educational outcomes vary across districts and student groups	Invest in early literacy, attendance, student supports, and educational equity
Maternal, child, and behavioral health outcomes remain uneven	Expand prevention, early intervention, and coordinated health services
Youth mental health and family stress continue to increase	Strengthen school-based and community behavioral health services
Community conditions differ across counties	Support flexible, place-based investments that address local needs while advancing shared regional goals

Investment Impact and Benefits

Investment Area	Expected Impact on Children and Families	Long-Term Regional Benefit
Child Care Expansion	Increased access to affordable, high-quality early learning	Improved school readiness and workforce participation
Housing Stability	Greater family stability and reduced housing insecurity	Healthier families and improved child development
Family Economic Stability	Reduced financial hardship and poverty	Stronger family resilience and economic mobility
Behavioral Health	Improved mental health and emotional well-being	Reduced crisis intervention and improved lifelong outcomes
Family Navigation	Better access to coordinated services	More efficient service delivery and stronger family engagement
Educational Success	Improved attendance, achievement, and graduation	Better educational and workforce outcomes
Maternal & Child Health	Healthier pregnancies and improved early childhood development	Reduced health disparities and healthier communities
Transportation & Rural Access	Improved access to education, health care, and family services	Greater equity across rural, Tribal, and coastal communities
Workforce Development	Increased capacity of child- and family-serving systems	More stable and sustainable regional workforce
Community Infrastructure	Expanded access to community resources	Stronger community resilience
Community Leadership & Partnerships	Improved collaboration across sectors	More coordinated and sustainable regional systems
Regional Data & Continuous Improvement	Better monitoring of progress and informed decision-making	Stronger accountability and continuous improvement

Raise Up Oregon 2024-2028 At-A-Glance

System Goal 1: The early childhood system is equitable: integrated, accessible, inclusive, anti-racist, and family centered.	System Goal 2: All families with young children are supported to ensure their well-being.	System Goal 3: All children are thriving in early childhood and beyond.
Objective 1: Honor and recognize the sovereignty of the nine federally recognized tribal nations within Oregon and ensure strong government-to-government relationships to benefit tribal communities. Objective 2: Multi-agency partnerships are developed at the state and local levels to systematically support improved outcomes and streamlined access for all young children and their families. Objective 3: Early Learning Hubs are leveraged and resourced to advance regional early childhood systems that are equitable, integrated, accessible, inclusive, and family centered. Objective 4: The business, philanthropic, and non-profit communities champion and support the development of the early childhood system.	Objective 5: Families with young children are supported in knowing about and accessing a full range of services that meet their needs and are culturally and linguistically responsive. Objective 6: Families with young children have increased access to economic supports. Objective 7: All families have access to support for their physical, social, emotional, behavioral, and oral health. Objective 8: Families have expanded access to culturally and linguistically responsive and specific family preservation strategies, resources, and programs focused on the prenatal-to-five population. Objective 9: Affordable housing is available statewide for all families with young children. Objective 10: All parents and families are supported and engaged in enabling their children to thrive.	Objective 11: Families have access to high-quality, culturally, and linguistically responsive birth-to-five pediatric health care services. Objective 12: Families have access to high-quality, culturally, and linguistically responsive birth-to-five social and emotional supports. Objective 13: Young children with developmental delays and disabilities are identified early and provided with inclusive services to reach their full potential. Objective 14: Families have access to high-quality (culturally responsive, inclusive, developmentally appropriate) and affordable early learning and care that meets their needs. Objective 15: The early childhood workforce is diverse, culturally responsive, high quality, and well compensated. Objective 16: Children and families experience supportive transitions and continuity of services across early learning and care and public education (K-12) settings.

Please visit the website of [Oregon Department of Early Learning and Care](#) for more information about the strategic plan.

Alignment with Raise Up Oregon 2024–2028

Overview

The Regional Strategic Investment Recommendations align with Raise Up Oregon 2024–2028, Oregon's statewide early childhood strategic plan. Together, these investments support equitable access to services, strengthen family well-being, improve early learning opportunities, and build a coordinated early childhood system.

Alignment of Regional Investment Priorities with Raise Up Oregon

Regional Investment Priority	Primary Purpose	Related Objectives*
Child Care Expansion	Increase affordable, high-quality child care and expand provider capacity	14, 15
Housing Stability & Affordability	Improve housing security for families with young children	5, 6, 9
Family Economic Stability	Reduce financial hardship and strengthen family resilience	2, 5, 6
Family Navigation & Service Coordination	Improve coordination and simplify access to family services	2, 3, 5, 8
Educational Success	Improve school readiness, literacy, attendance, and student success	14, 15, 16
Maternal & Child Health	Improve prenatal care, healthy births, and early childhood development	7, 10, 11
Behavioral Health	Expand prevention, early intervention, and mental health supports	7, 8, 12
Transportation & Rural Service Access	Reduce geographic barriers to essential services	2, 3
Workforce Development	Strengthen the early childhood, education, and health workforce	4, 15
Community Infrastructure	Expand community resources and service capacity	1, 3
Community Leadership & Partnerships	Build collaborative, family-centered systems	1, 2
Regional Data & Continuous Improvement	Support shared measurement and evidence-informed decision-making	1, 4

Note: Objective numbers correspond to the objectives identified in Raise Up Oregon 2024–2028.

Alignment by Statewide Goal

Raise Up Oregon Goal	Related Regional Investment Priorities
System Goal 1: The early childhood system is equitable: integrated, accessible, inclusive, anti-racist, and family centered.	Family Navigation, Transportation & Rural Access, Workforce Development, Community Infrastructure, Community Leadership, Regional Data
System Goal 2: All families with young children are supported to ensure their well-being.	Housing Stability, Family Economic Stability, Maternal & Child Health, Behavioral Health
System Goal 3: All children are thriving in early childhood and beyond.	Child Care Expansion, Educational Success, Workforce Development

Together, these investment recommendations advance both regional priorities and Oregon's statewide early childhood goals. By aligning local investments with Raise Up Oregon, the Early Learning Hub and its partners can strengthen collaboration, maximize resources, and improve outcomes for children and families across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties.

Regional Summary

The highest regional investment priorities focus on addressing the interconnected challenges of child care access, housing affordability, behavioral health, family economic stability, and educational success. Together, these investments can improve family stability, support workforce participation, strengthen school readiness, and promote positive outcomes for children and families throughout the EL Hub region. Continued collaboration among community partners, schools, health systems, local governments, Tribal organizations, and families will be essential to achieving long-term impact.

These recommendations align with the Early Learning Hub's vision of helping communities create an accessible and collaborative system of support and care for families that enables children to grow up safe, nurtured, healthy, and prepared for school and life. By bringing together partners, communities, and families to increase family stability, improve kindergarten readiness, and ensure equitable, family-centered, and culturally and linguistically responsive services, the region can build a stronger foundation for the long-term success and well-being of children and families across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties.

Conclusion

The 2026 Regional Strategic Investment Recommendations translate findings from the 2026 Regional Data Book and the Community Asset Mapping Project into a shared framework for action across Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties. Together, these findings demonstrate that the well-being of children and families is shaped by interconnected factors—including access to child care, housing, economic stability, education, health, and coordinated community supports.

While each county has unique strengths and priorities, many challenges are shared across the region and require coordinated, cross-sector solutions. No single organization can address these issues alone. Lasting progress depends on strong partnerships among families, Tribal nations, community organizations, schools, health care providers, local governments, businesses, and state agencies.

The recommendations in this report are intended to serve as a guide for strategic planning, resource allocation, and collaborative decision-making. By investing in data-informed, equitable, and family-centered strategies, the Early Learning Hub and its partners can strengthen early childhood systems, reduce disparities, and expand opportunities for children and families throughout the region.

As community needs continue to evolve, these recommendations should be reviewed alongside updated data and community input to ensure that investments remain responsive, effective, and aligned with regional priorities and the goals of Raise Up Oregon 2024–2028. Together, these efforts will help build a stronger, more coordinated system in which every child has the opportunity to grow up safe, healthy, supported, and ready for lifelong success.



Prepared parents. Healthy families.
Padres preparados. Familias saludables.



Early Learning Hub

of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties



**Preschool
Promise**

Oregon Department of
Early Learning and Care

Family Resources & Education Center

Linn-Benton Community College

6500 Pacific Blvd. SW, LM-132

Albany, Oregon 97321

(541) 917-4917

elhub@linnbenton.edu

<https://lblearlylearninghub.org>



Business Outreach Initiative



Linn-Benton
Community College

