

**KITCHEN TABLE  
CONVERSATION  
GUIDE:  
Community Groups**

**Early Literacy  
in Communities and at Home**



[WWW.OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG](http://WWW.OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG)



This guide is for **community groups** in Oregon who want to organize and host a Kitchen Table Conversation with their own group or with other community groups about early literacy. Early literacy means young children developing reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills.

We hope this Guide provides helpful ideas for organizing a community conversation, a structure for what to talk about during the conversation, and a clear way to summarize what people shared and get it to OKT.

If you need support or assistance, please reach out! Email [info@oregonskitchentable](mailto:info@oregonskitchentable) or call (503)725-5248.

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# OUR APPROACH

Oregon's Kitchen Table strives to include all Oregonians in the decisions that affect their lives, with a particular focus on reaching, engaging, and hearing from Oregonians who have been left out of traditional public processes.

We work with organizers, translators, and interpreters so materials and online and in-person consultations are available for Oregonians who speak a wide variety of languages and learn in a variety of ways.

We recognize that people bring all different levels of knowledge and familiarity regarding issues / policies. We use approaches to ensure those who may not have as in-depth knowledge can still respond and share what they believe and have experienced. People participate in many different ways: through online and paper surveys, individual or small group interviews, culturally specific and community events, festivals, listening sessions, or public meetings open to anyone.

One of the approaches we use is what we call a Kitchen Table Conversation: a group of people gathering together to learn from each other and share what they think in the language, setting, and format that is most comfortable for them.



# GATHERING PEOPLE TO TALK

## INVITATION

Use whatever method people will pay attention to, but make sure it feels warm, welcoming, and inviting. It might be a text, a phone call, What'sApp, a social media post, or an email. Some people set up e-invites. Make clear the time, place, purpose, what to expect (food or participant incentive), and if they need to RSVP.

## GROUP SIZE

10-12 people is a nice size. But larger groups can be broken up into smaller groups. And you can still have a good conversation with 2-3 people.

## FORMAT

You can meet in person, over Zoom, or group chat (people have used WhatsApp before, for example). You can talk while planting trees or clearing out invasive species. You can have the conversation on a bus during a field trip. Hold the conversation in a space that is easy and comfortable for people in your community.



# WELCOME

## HOST

Think of yourself as the host, welcoming people at your table,

## FOOD

If you are in person, have food! Even a simple snack (popcorn, cookies, water, fruit) will help people feel welcome.

## FUN

If you're in-person or virtual, have some element of fun and joy that makes sense for your group: music, a short game, decorations.

## ACTIVITY

Have an opening activity that allows for all to say something at the beginning so that they can get comfortable. For example, you could invite everyone to share a favorite song, story, or book.



# ROLES FOR CO-HOSTS

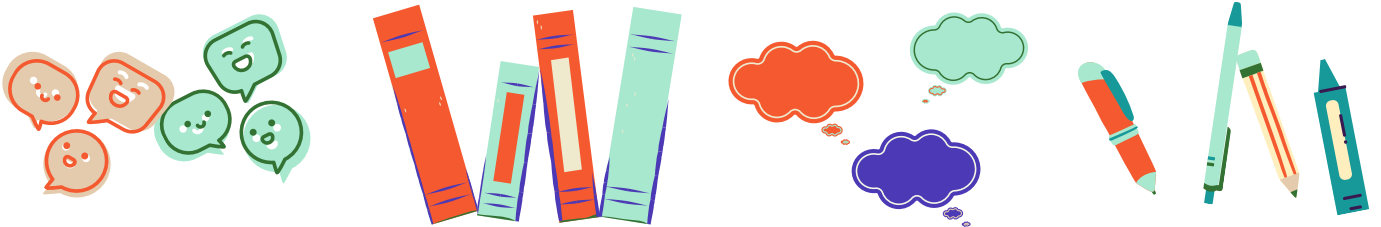
If you are working with a partner or a team to co-host a conversation, decide who will take which role. Here are some common roles. You could also invite participants to join you and take on one of these roles.



- Facilitator: Guides conversation, asks questions, and helps capture themes, commonalities, or differences.
- Notetaker: Captures what people say. Bullet points are fine! If the notetaker can get any good quotes, that's great but not required.
- Timekeeper: Use a clock (phone works!) to help make sure that there's enough time for each part of the conversation. Give facilitator / group time warnings.
- Reporter: If there are small group discussions, shares a summary of what the group discussed for the whole group.
- Observer: Helps the Facilitator make sure everyone gets a chance to talk or that no one person takes up too much time.

# PURPOSE FOR GATHERING

Explain why you've invited people from community groups to gather together to talk about how families and communities support children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. Below is a description of what the decision is and why it matters. You can read this or summarize in your own words.



In 2023 the Oregon Legislature passed a bill called the Early Literacy Success Initiative. This bill directs the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) to help community groups and families support young children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. This is to take place both in the community and at home. ODE is partnering with Oregon's Kitchen Table to hear from people across the state about this topic.

Input from families with young children and community groups will help ODE create tools for community groups and families to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language.

# GUIDING THE CONVERSATION

## 1. BACKGROUND

People have different experiences and knowledge about the topic. We honor all of those experiences and knowledge. Share the basic background provided in the "Purpose for Gathering" section.

## 2. QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION



OKT has developed a few questions with the decision maker. We usually have a few main questions to ask people. We also have follow up questions if people need some direction in responding or if there's extra time.

## 3. HOW TO SPEND YOUR TIME TOGETHER

It's ok if people want to spend time on just one or two questions. We want to know where their interests and energies are, so that's fine!



## 4. CONFIDENTIALITY



Let people know that their names or anything that identifies them won't be shared. You will give OKT a summary of what you all talked about. OKT will combine all the input from different conversations, surveys, and other ways people share what they think.



# CONVERSATION QUESTIONS

**What do you see that is working well to support families and children develop literacy skills?**

These could be programs, services, or tools. These can be in any language.

Follow up:

- What do you see that is working well and is culturally responsive, particularly for children who are learning English as a new language or are multilingual learners?
- What do you see that is working well for children experiencing a disability?

**What would you like to learn more about as regards helping children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language?**

Follow up: What are some of the barriers or opportunities you see for these activities?

**The framework for community groups could cover a number of different topics related to both early literacy and families and communities. What ideas for you about what those topics should be?**

Here are some potential types of overall topics:

- Cultural identity development (example, materials in multiple languages)
  - Academic supports (example, tutoring)
  - Leadership development (example, family members support other families as peer-to-peer mentors)
  - Giving back to the community (example, volunteer programs or book drives)
  - Wraparound services (example, transportation)
  - Family engagement (example, trainings for families)
- 
- Which resonate with what you're seeing families / children experience related to developing literacy skills? Which don't resonate with you?
  - What else would you like to see as an overall topic?
  - What might fall under any of the topics you've identified for your community?



## CONNECTING BACK

Let people know where their input will go and how it will be used. You can use the timeline on the next page. Also let them know that you will connect with Oregon's Kitchen Table with whatever questions came up and circle back to people with any answers.

## INVITING MORE VOICES

Share information about ways that people can invite others they know to share what they think. Use the flyers with the link and QR code included after the summary templates.

## APPRECIATIONS

Let people know how important their input is and we appreciate hearing their ideas, thoughts, experiences and time on this important issue. You can invite everyone to share their appreciations for each other.

## ACTIVITY

If there's time, you can invite people to share aloud. If there's not time, have post-it notes or cards for people to write or draw their response to a closing question: One example: "What is a hope you have for the children in your community as they develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills?"



# WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

## 1. INVITE YOUR NEIGHBORS TO PARTICIPATE

We are gathering input from March 11 through April 20, 2024.  
Invite other people you know to share what they think!

<https://tinyurl.com/okt-earlyliteracy>

Scan here with your phone:



## 2. OKT REPORT ON WHAT WE HEARD

OKT will provide a report of what we heard to ODE. We will post the report and a summary of that report in 9 languages on the OKT website. We will also share it with anyone who gave us their contact information.

## 3. HOW ODE WILL USE THE INPUT

Your input will help ODE create a framework and a toolkit for community groups and families to help children develop reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills in any language.

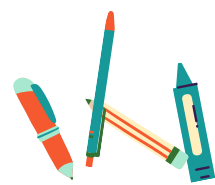
## 4. HOW COMMUNITIES CAN USE THE TOOLKIT

ODE will make the toolkit available later in spring 2024. Community groups can use the toolkit to guide and support their work helping families and young children.



# TIPS FOR SUMMARY

- ~ Bullet points are fine! This is a summary not a formal report.
- ~ Let us know any areas where there is agreement or disagreement in people's perspectives.
- ~ Let us know if there are any unique perspectives (an idea / experience / belief one person shared even if others didn't have it).
- ~ Add your observations/reflections: Feelings, sense of issues, concerns, positive experiences.
- ~ Let us know if there's anyone we ought to follow up with on any ideas they shared.
- ~ Share any questions about the project that you couldn't answer and who to follow up with.
- ~ Include any pictures from the conversation. Make sure to ask permission first!





# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Date / Place:

# of people:

General description of the group (age ranges, languages spoken, any ways the group might identify themselves):

Opening activity (what you did, anything anyone shared):

What do you see that is working well to support families and children develop literacy skills?



# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

What people would like to learn more

Barriers or opportunities for these activities



# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Framework topics

Closing activity (what you did, what people shared)



# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Areas of agreement among the group

Areas of disagreement among the group

Unique perspectives





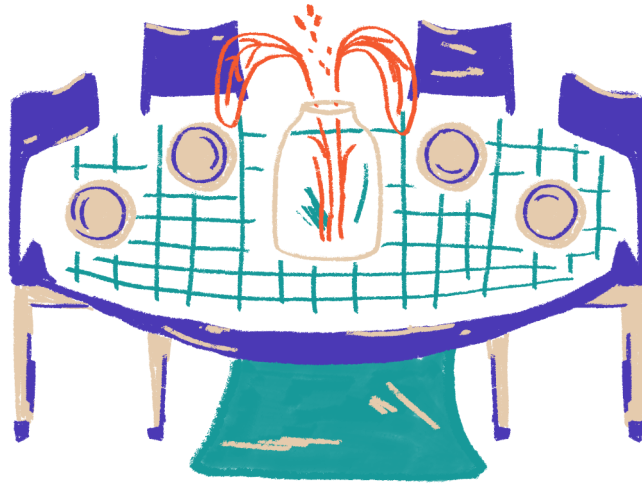
# SUMMARY TEMPLATE

Areas where someone was persuaded by someone else's point of view

Any observations you had

Quotes

**SEND YOUR SUMMARY BY APRIL 10TH TO [SAGILES@PDX.EDU](mailto:SAGILES@PDX.EDU)**



**QUESTIONS?  
IDEAS?  
NEED SUPPORT?  
CONTACT US!**



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INFO@OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG



WWW.OREGONSKITCHENTABLE.ORG

