

the dial on youth outcomes across the entire community. As such, our first Families Forward activity for early childhood, which supports the Cradle to Career goal of ensuring children enter kindergarten ready to learn, is to ensure that children register for kindergarten on time.

Why Kindergarten and On-Time Registration are Important²

Data shows chronic absence in kindergarten is associated with lower academic performance in 1st grade. More importantly, for children in poverty, chronic absence in kindergarten predicted the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of 5th grade, even if children’s attendance improved after kindergarten. In Multnomah County, during the 2009-2010 school year, 29% of kindergarteners were chronically absent.

To improve these outcomes, early childhood providers agree a first step is to ensure families register their children for kindergarten by June. When families register on time:

- Schools can connect with families to provide support and information about kindergarten prior to the first day of school
- Families are notified of summer programs that help with school readiness skills and educate parents about the importance of kindergarten attendance
- Districts can ensure adequate kindergarten staff for each school

Home Forward’s Role

Home Forward is uniquely positioned to impact kindergarten registration rates. Until a family registers their child for kindergarten, school districts do not know they exist. Home Forward knows where families with kindergarten-aged children live, and we house approximately 7% of all Multnomah County kindergarteners.

	Centennial	David Douglas	Gresham-Barlow	Parkrose	Portland Public	Reynolds	Total
District-wide Kindergarten Enrollment 2012-2013	449	858	830	254	3992	885	7268
Home Forward Kindergarten-Age Children	29	96	19	22	264	66	496
	6%	11%	2%	9%	7%	7%	7%

In early 2012, Home Forward worked with Multnomah County’s SUN Service System to map our kindergarten-aged children and identify the neighborhood schools for each family. We sent families materials about kindergarten information sessions at each school, the importance of early registration, and summer opportunities available to children once they were registered. Depending where families lived and which programs they were eligible

² Facts cited come from the Multnomah County SUN Service System’s Kindergarten Counts campaign: www.multco.us/sun/kindergartencounts and https://www.multco.us/sites/default/files/sun/documents/kindergarten_counts_description_12.03.12.pdf

for, some families received as many as three mailings in the eight months prior to the start of school. Many of the materials were available in Spanish, Russian, Somali, and Vietnamese.

Additionally, Resident Services staff placed registration posters and materials at Public Housing sites and were asked to follow up with families at their properties to answer any questions and to support families in turning in the needed paperwork on time.

Home Forward Outcomes

This year, Home Forward executed a data sharing agreement with Portland Public Schools (PPS) that allowed us to obtain aggregate data³ on kindergarten registration rates for Home Forward children for the fall of 2011 (baseline year prior to implementation of registration outreach activities) and the fall of 2012.

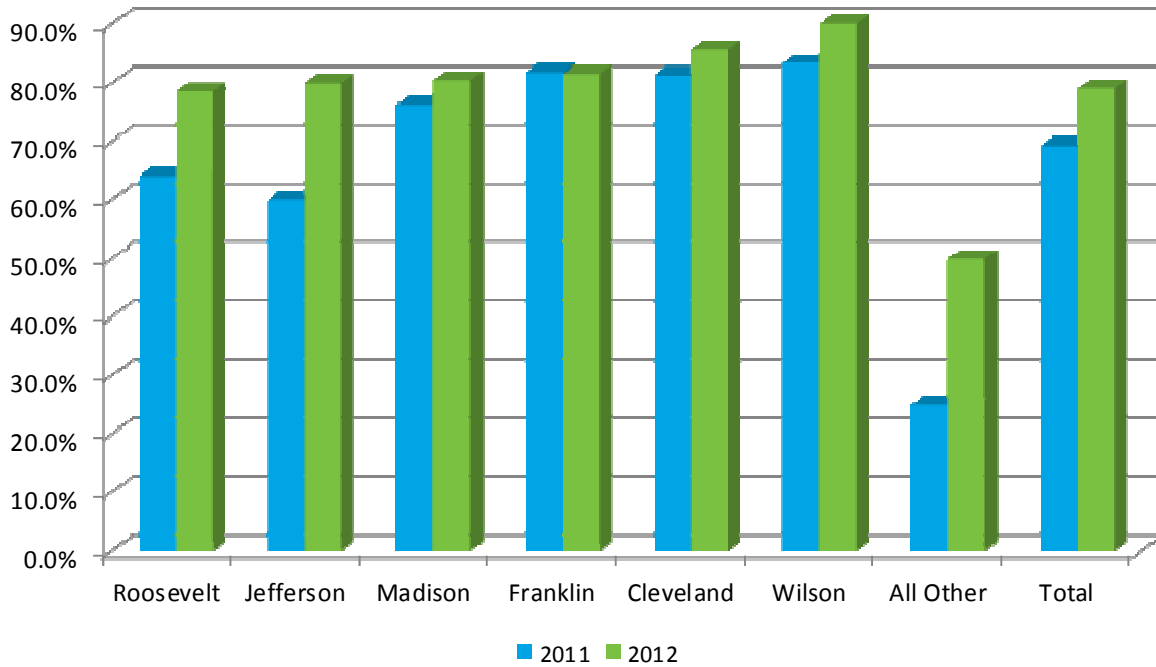
The charts on the next page show the percentage of Home Forward children registering for kindergarten in PPS on time for the past two school years, aggregated by elementary school clusters that feed each PPS high school. Overall, the rate of on-time registration for Home Forward children jumped from 69.2% in 2011 to 79% in 2012.

School clusters with the highest percentage of children living in Public Housing (as opposed to Section 8) made the most significant gains, likely explained by the extra outreach conducted by Resident Services staff. However, school clusters with the highest percentage of Section 8 families have higher overall registration rates.

Simultaneous to Home Forward's outreach efforts, many other systems and early childhood providers were delivering the same messages about kindergarten registration to families across Multnomah County. It is highly likely that a portion of Home Forward families received information from sources other than Home Forward.

³ Home Forward and PPS are both mindful of confidentiality issues. All data from PPS was reported to Home Forward in aggregate only to avoid disclosure of details regarding any particular family. Under the terms of the data sharing agreement, all individual level data used to produce the aggregate report was discarded by PPS as soon as the report was completed.

Home Forward Kindergarten Registration % of children registered by Sept 1



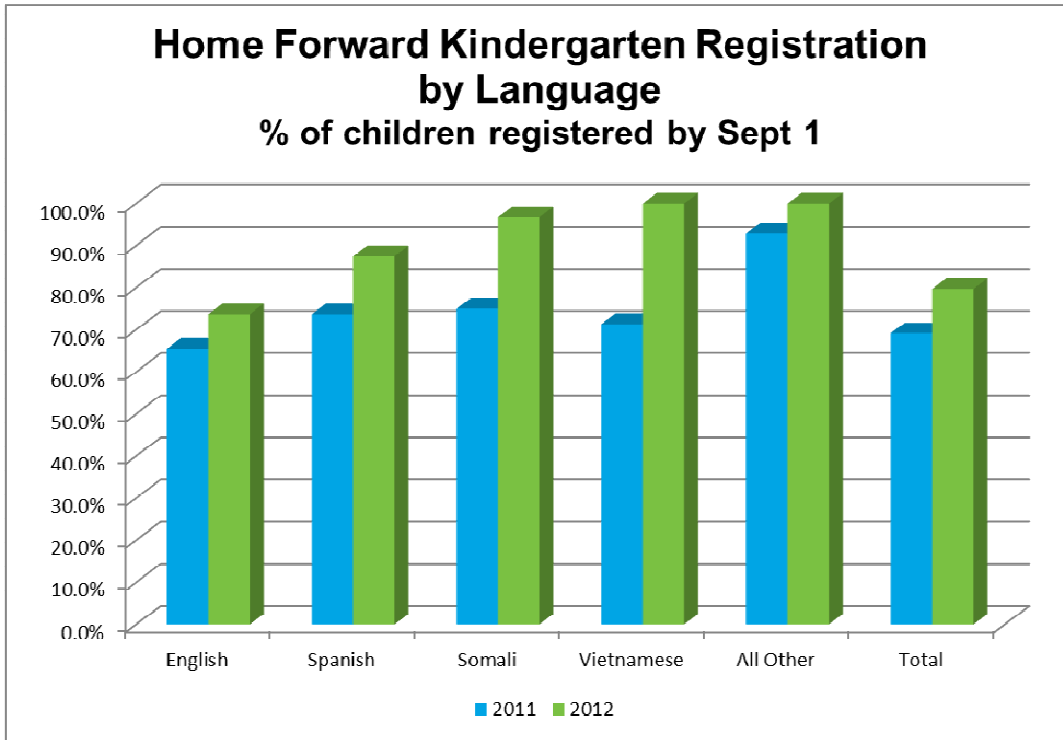
Home Forward Kindergarten Registration

School Cluster	% Living in Public Housing*	2011		2012		Change in Percentage Points
		Total No. Children	% Reg by Sept 1	Total No. Children	% Reg by Sept 1	
Roosevelt	65.3%	64	64.1%	65	78.5%	14.4%
Jefferson	34.4%	40	60.0%	50	80.0%	20.0%
Madison	1.9%	38	76.3%	41	80.5%	4.2%
Franklin	0.0%	33	81.8%	27	81.5%	-0.3%
Cleveland	14.6%	16	81.3%	14	85.7%	4.4%
Wilson	34.5%	12	83.3%	10	90.0%	6.7%
All Other**	46.2%	8	25%	12	50%	25.0%
Total		211	69.2%	219	79.0%	9.8%

* For Roosevelt/Jefferson clusters, kids living at New Columbia or Humboldt Gardens with Section 8 vouchers are included in the Public Housing count because they may have received outreach from Resident Services staff

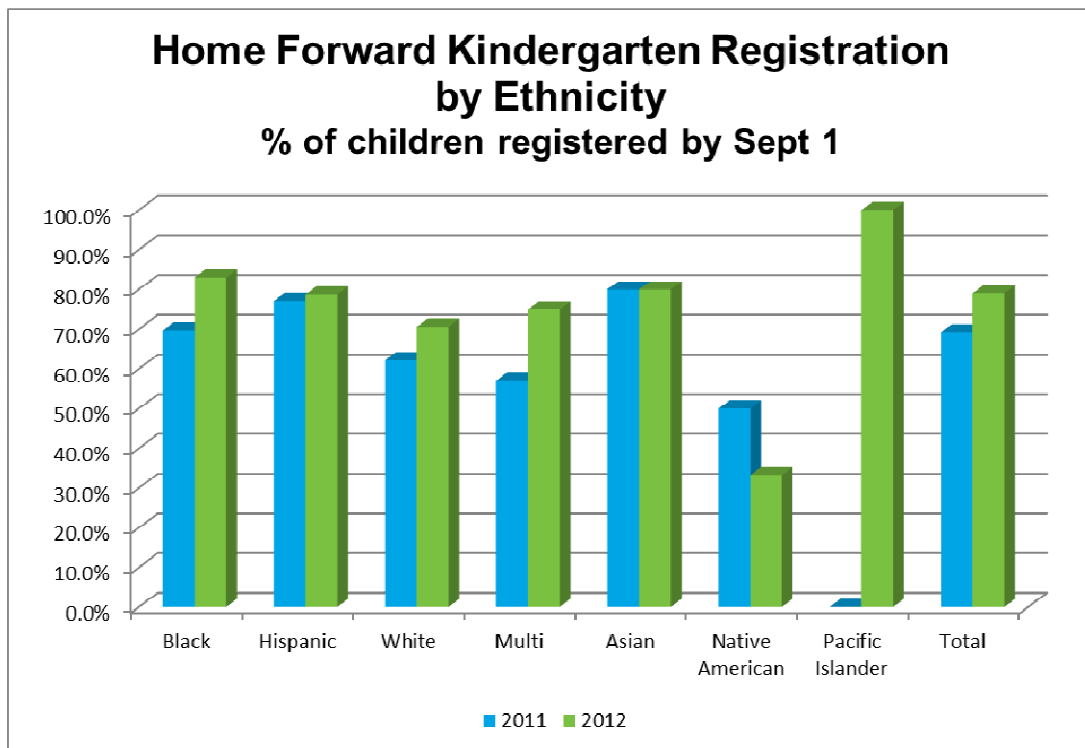
** All Other includes Grant, Lincoln, charter schools, and what PPS terms "Other District School/Program"

Looking at registration data by race, ethnicity, and language, an interesting trend emerges. Across those population groups where there are 20 or more, White and English speaking families have the lowest registration rates and, with the exception of Hispanic families, the lowest gains over the two years.



Home Forward Kindergarten Registration by Language					
Language	2011		2012		Change in Percentage Points
	Total No. Children	% Reg by Sept 1	Total No. Children	% Reg by Sept 1	
English	151	65.6%	152	73.7%	8.1%
Spanish	19	73.7%	24	87.5%	13.8%
Somali	20	75.0%	30	96.7%	21.7%
Vietnamese	7	71.4%	2	100.0%	28.6%
All Other	14	92.9%	9	100.0%	7.1%
Total	211	69.20%	217	79.70%	10.5%

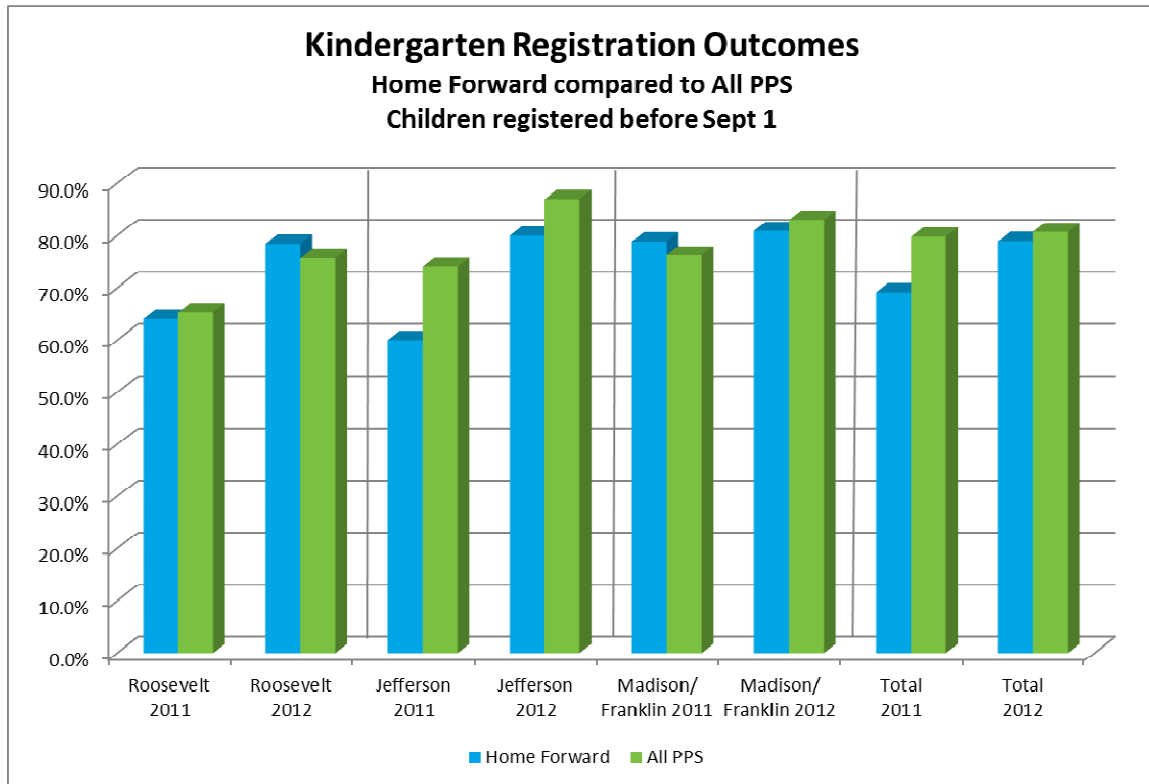
Black families had the highest registration rates in 2012. However, after removing the Somali-speaking families from that group (who registered at a rate of nearly 100%), the registration rates for Black families fall more in line with the others at 78%. The most puzzling data, however, shows that Hispanic families had the highest registration rates prior to our outreach efforts, but saw little improvement. And yet Spanish-speakers displayed a dramatic increase. Spanish-speaking families are more likely to live in Public Housing, where Home Forward had more impact on registration rates, but this does not explain why Hispanic families as a group did not show change.



Home Forward Kindergarten Registration by Race/Ethnicity					
Ethnicity	2011		2012		Change in Percentage Points
	Total No. Children	% Reg by Sept 1	Total No. Children	% Reg by Sept 1	
Black	99	69.7%	112	83.0%	13.3%
Hispanic	48	77.1%	47	78.7%	1.6%
White	37	62.2%	34	70.6%	8.4%
Multi	14	57.1%	16	75.0%	17.9%
Asian	10	80.0%	5	80.0%	0.0%
Native American	2	50.0%	3	33.3%	-16.7%
Pacific Islander	1	0%	2	100%	100.0%
Total	211	69.2%	219	79.0%	9.8%

District Wide Outcomes

With other systems and agencies newly focused on registration, a question to ask is whether Home Forward's efforts actually made a difference. The charts below show Home Forward's registration rates compared with rates for the cluster as a whole, in clusters where Home Forward had more than 20 entering kindergarteners.



Home Forward Kindergarten Registration Compared with Portland Public Schools (PPS)						
School Cluster	2011		2012		Change in Percentage Points	
	Home Forward	All PPS	Home Forward	All PPS	Home Forward	All PPS
Roosevelt	64.1%	65.3%	78.5%	75.7%	14.4%	10.4%
Jefferson	60.0%	74.1%	80.0%	87.1%	20.0%	13.0%
Madison/Franklin (SE)	78.9%	76.3%	80.9%	83.0%	2.0%	6.7%
Total	69.2%	79.8%	79.0%	80.7%	9.8%	0.9%

This data strongly suggests that where there are concentrations of Public Housing (Roosevelt and Jefferson clusters), Home Forward's efforts had a significant impact, outpacing improvement for the cluster as a whole, and, in the case of the New Columbia area (Roosevelt), achieving a higher rate of on-time registration.

While this did not hold true for areas where our families are predominantly in Section 8, it is worth noting that the data provided by PPS includes all children in the district and does not focus specifically on low-income children. Next year, Home Forward intends to request data that will allow us to compare our families' registration rates against the rates of PPS children receiving free or reduced lunch, which should give us a better picture of the impact we are having.

Next Steps

Nearly half of Home Forward's kindergarteners live in East County and do not attend PPS. Home Forward is meeting with representatives from the five East County school districts in mid-August to explore similar data-sharing opportunities. By year-end, we hope to have three years of data from all six districts, allowing us to more fully examine the trends identified in this report.

A staff workgroup recently developed an action plan to incorporate kindergarten registration outreach more fully into operations next year. Already, Resident Services and Property Management staff are considering what school-related materials to provide families during Public Housing Orientation. We have added mapping capability to YARDI that will allow Rent Assistance staff to determine – with one click of a button – the neighborhood school for a family moving to a new unit. Over the next year, the goal is to ensure all departments are familiar with registration timelines so that outreach becomes part of annual workplans. Additionally, we will look at how to reach, more effectively, families who speak languages that registration materials are not available in. And, based on this data, the workgroup may consider adding an action step regarding how to connect more closely with Section 8 families.

Home Forward is excited to share this data with our partners. It demonstrates the impact that we can have with our families, even without significant investments of new resources, and confirms the importance of Home Forward's role in helping the community improve outcomes for youth.