

HB 3234-A

The Association of Oregon Counties Supports the Efforts of the Early Learning Council

Co-Chairs Komp and Monroe and Members of the Committee:

The Association of Oregon Counties would like to thank the leadership of the Governor's office and the Early Learning Council for their work in developing the Early Learning Division of the Department of Education.

County Commissioners and AOC staff have been working closely with Early Learning Council Director Jada Rupley and ELC staff to develop a plan that ensures that no services currently offered through the local commissions on children and families will be lost while transitioning to the Early Learning Hubs. Both the counties and the ELC have worked diligently on the transition plan for Healthy Start/Healthy Families, Relief Nurseries and the commission "flexible funds." The counties expect to see a draft of this plan by the end of the week and we look forward to continuing to work on this important piece in the development of the Early Learning Division.

The local commission on children and families will sunset on July 1, 2014 and hubs will role out sometime after that date. The commission's "flexible funds" are currently managed to provide services at the discretion of the local commission. These important services will be lost if the flexible funds are no longer delivered to the counties. AOC supports giving the counties the opportunity to continue to receive these funds in order to deliver local services, as long as they meet the criteria of the Early Learning Council and until a local hub is in place, to those children in need.

The counties appreciate and support the vision of the Early Learning Initiative. The development of the Early Learning Division is the next natural step in this important transformation and AOC support these efforts. We also ask for your support for continued funding for important services offered by the counties to for children in need until hubs are in place. For more information or questions, please contact AOC Staff Mark Nystrom (mnystrom@aocweb.org).