

From: Kathryn Hickok
Sent: Wednesday, March 04, 2015 5:23 PM
To: Engbring Gretchen
Subject: testimony in opposition to SB 321

Senator Roblan and members of the Committee, my name is Kathryn Hickok, and I am a resident of Lake Oswego.

I'm writing in opposition to SB 321, which would lower the compulsory school age from seven to five years old.

While most children start at least half-day Kindergarten as five-year-olds, not every five-year-old is ready for full-time school. According to a recent report by the National Center for Education Statistics, about [six percent of five-to-six-year-olds nationwide](#) are not enrolled in school. These children may need a little more time to be ready for a formal classroom setting.

Children are unique, and maturing at different rates is normal. Temperament, emotional maturity, life experiences, and family situations also can affect a child's classroom readiness. Parents are in a better position to determine a young child's abilities than an arbitrary standard set by state law.

I understand that SB 321 provides no protections for children who are not ready for a traditional classroom at five years of age. Their parents currently have the option to let them grow up a little first. This bill removes parental discretion.

Forcing children to start school too early for them can have long-lasting consequences. They may view themselves as failures, think they don't like school, or find themselves playing a demoralizing game of catch-up with their classroom peers.

I urge you to defend parents' ability to decide when their preschool-aged kids are ready for full-time school.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Kathryn Hickok
Lake Oswego