

To: Ways and Means Education Subcommittee Members
From: Sally Steinman, Home Visitor, Pearl Buck Preschool
Date: March 11th, 2015
Re: House Bill 5016

Co-Chairs Senator Monroe and Representative Komp, Members of the Committee,

My name is Sally Steinman and I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on behalf of the home visiting program at Pearl Buck Preschool. Pearl Buck Preschool is located in Eugene, Oregon and is a tuition free preschool program which supports families where a caregiver has an intellectual disability. I work as a home visitor for families who have a child that is on our pre-enrollment list. I support families through parent education, community referrals, basic need supports, and developmental screenings.

I also support families through an innovation intervention created by The University of Oregon and OSLP called FIND, which stands for Filming Interactions to Nurture Development. It is a 10 week video coaching intervention which shows parent or caregivers things they're already doing that promote healthy brain growth in their child. We do this by filming the caregiver interacting with their child while doing an everyday activity (such as eating or playing). The film is then edited down to short clips of positive micro-social interactions and shown to them at the next visit. It is a strength-based intervention so only positive interactions are highlighted. The coaching session discusses ways the parent responds in a positive, meaningful way.

Aside from the caregiver having an intellectual disability, many of our families are impacted by significant stressors which can impede parent responsiveness. Stressors include poverty, mental health conditions, transportation barriers, and social isolation. FIND identifies and reinforces positive meaningful responses by showing parents videos of themselves already doing it. They only see and hear about the good stuff they are doing. For many of our parents, this is quite possibly the first time in their lives they've received praise. We all know how challenging parenting can be and the minimal, if any, recognition a caregiver receives. Our FIND parents are getting genuine praise about what they're already doing that is truly helping their child's brain in developing social skills, emotions, and critical thinking skills. They get to see it for themselves, which really allows them to believe it. It boosts their confidence in not only their ability to parent, but in themselves.

I've seen parents get very emotional after seeing the film and understanding that they do have what it takes to be a strong, nurturing parent. I have seen tears, gasps, hands covering mouths, and countless smiles and hugs given to their children. FIND is a priceless gift for parents who experience chronic stress. It lifts our families up, strengthens their relationships with their children, and promotes healthy brain development. I'm honored to be a part of FIND because it's such an empowering, positive, and supportive program that reaps long term rewards for some of our most vulnerable Oregon families.