

March 11, 2015

Co-Chairs Monroe and Komp
Members of the Joint Education Committee

Dear Co-Chairs Monroe and Komp,

Children First for Oregon strives to make long-term, systemic change by advocating for policies and programs that keep children healthy and allow their families the opportunity to be economically secure. We want Oregon to be the best place to be a kid.

To that end, Oregon has committed to a 100% graduation rate by 2025. Yet last year Oregon had one of the lowest graduation rates in the country. Research has shown a clear link between early reading and high-school graduation – but only one-third of Oregon fourth-graders read proficiently according to a national assessment.¹

I will highlight a few important programs within the education budget.

First, Oregon's **Home Visiting Program**: Only 15% of Oregon's high risk families are served with one of various home visiting programs. I am here today to encourage you to invest in these children and their families. Several studies show that the money invested now will be returned by reducing the need for social services later in life.

Mothers who meet certain risk factors are asked if they would like someone to visit them at their home to help them find services and answer questions. Like all the other early childhood programs this services is voluntary. No visits unless they are wanted.

The evidence to support Home Visitation is overwhelming. Among some of the research studies demonstrating its effectiveness²:

- A longitudinal study of one home visitation program found³ that pregnant women who did not receive home visits had more than three times as many convictions as women who participated. Girls not served by the program were nine times more likely to be convicted by age 19 than those participating in the program.
- Data collected in Cincinnati⁴ found that infants in home visiting participants had a 60% lower mortality rate than for the comparison group.

¹ National Assessment of Educational Progress, http://www.nationsreportcard.gov/reading_math_2013/#/state-performance

² <http://www.fightcrime.org/wp-content/uploads/FCIK-Orange-Not-Color-Report-OR.pdf>

³ Luckey, D. W., Olds, D. L., Zhang, W., Henderson, C., Eckenrode, M. K. J., Kitzman, H., & Pettitt, L. (2008). Revised Analysis of 15-Year Outcomes in the Elmira Trial of the Nurse-Family Partnership. Prevention Research Center for Family and Child Health, University of Colorado Department of Pediatrics

⁴ Donovan, E.F., Ammerman, R.T., Besl, J., Atherton, H., Khoury, J.C., Altate, M., et al. (2007). Intensive home visiting associated with decreased risk of infant death. *Pediatrics*, 119, 1145-1151.

- Home visiting can make families more economically secure. An Early Head Start program with a strong home visiting component improved the education and training of participating mothers and increased their incomes by \$300 per month on average⁵.

Our request is to increase funding for Healthy Families of Oregon by \$10 million so that this program can reach many more of those children at the highest risk.

My next request is to increase the reach of **pre-K education**. Early learning programs have been proven to boost grade-level reading, close achievement gaps, and boost lifetime earnings for participants. But only 40% of Oregon preschool age children are in school.

Currently, Oregon's pre-Kindergarten only has enough slots for 35% of 3 to 5 year-olds below the federal poverty level.⁶ The additional \$30 million investment would serve another 1,500 at risk children. Numerous studies have shown that students in pre-K are more prepared for school⁷ and earn as much as 19% more in their careers later in life⁸.

We all know that importance of **K-12 education**. Children First executive director Tonia Hunt will testify regarding the budget.

One other program I want to highlight is found in a policy bill (HB 2545 and POP 148). **Students eligible for reduced lunches should not have to go hungry** when they are unable to find sufficient money that day. An investment of \$2.4 million will cover all the children who are at or below 185% of the Federal Policy Level to participate.

Statewide 39,139 children qualify to receive reduced price lunch out of more than 290,000 children across the state. Funding the \$2.4 million will make a world of difference for these children.

Thank you for your attention and your work for Oregon's children.

James Barta
Legislative Director
Children First for Oregon

⁵ Jones Harden, B., Chazan-Cohen, R., Raikes, H., & Vogel, C. (2012). Early head start home visitation: The role of implementation in bolstering program benefits. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 40(4), 438-455

⁶ Numerator: Oregon Department of Education, Early Learning Division. "Oregon Head Start Prekindergarten Programs: 2013–2014 Directory." <http://www.ode.state.or.us/superintendent/priorities/2013-14-opkhsdirectory---final.pdf>

Denominator: CFFO analysis of American Community Survey Public-Use Microdata 2010–2013.

⁷ <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1541-0072.2005.00092.x/abstract>

⁸ From Preschool to Prosperity, Timothy Bartik <http://www.amazon.com/From-Preschool-Prosperity-Childhood-Education/dp/0880994827>