

SB 213: Early Learning Hubs

Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee

March 12, 2015

Chair Sara Gelsler, Vice Chair Olsen and Members of the Committee,

For the record, I am Becky Rasmussen, Owner of Just Like Home Nursery School. I run a Certified Family Childcare in my home. Prior to this, I owned and operated two large childcare centers in Pendleton. I am submitting testimony in support of SB 213. SB 213 makes the Early Learning Hubs permanent and continues the work local communities have undertaken to align early learning systems, support thriving families and ensure children are ready to succeed in kindergarten.

Value of the work

- A child's brain develops more in the first five years of life than at any other time, creating the foundation for all future learning and development.
- During the first few years of life, 700 new synapses (neural connections) are formed every second. If a child is in child care for 8 hours a day, that equates to over 20 million new synapses formed while in child care. Early learning experiences are focused on a child's learning and development can make a tremendous impact on a child's future.

How Hubs add value

- The Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub is drawing upon the experience and expertise of early learning providers and working to amplify our work through cross sector collaborations.
- The Hub is leveraging and coordinating existing programs such as home visiting, Head Start, and relief nurseries to build on the good work of these programs, share lessons learned across service providers, and encourage the reduction of duplicated services in order to provide the most relevant and effective services to families.
- As part of the hub, we are all asked to think beyond the mission and reach of our individual programs to ensure that the children and families in our region who most need services are receiving them. We are accepting collective responsibility for the underserved children and families in our region.

My experience with the Hub this year has been so positive. To be honest, in the past I have felt that my career choice, as an early child educator/caregiver, wasn't seen as a profession. I have known for years how important the early years are and how much impact we can have on the development of infants, toddlers and preschool age children. I feel that the Hub has brought this to light for the teachers and administrators in the public school system.

It was so helpful to me to learn exactly what kindergarten teachers are looking for upon entry to kindergarten. And I think it was valuable for them to see how much I do in my setting, and how we really can work together. Being a part of the Hub also motivated me to want to be better, do better, have more of an impact than I already have. I can't express enough how wonderful this experience has been for me and the children I serve. I hope that it continues next year and that I can be a part of it again.

Sincerely,

Becky Rasmussen

Owner/Provider

Just Like Home Nursery School