



## Southern Oregon Child and Family Council Inc.

1001 Beall Lane · P.O. Box 3697 · Central Point, OR 97502 · (541) 734-5150 · Fax (541) 734-2279  
Josephine County Office: 223 SE M Street, Coalition for Kids Bldg · Grants Pass, OR 97526 · (541) 472-4851 · Fax (541) 472-4855

March 12, 2015

Senator Sara Gelser,  
Human Services and Early Childhood Committee Chair

Senator Gelser:

I am the Head Start director for Southern Oregon Head Start and I am writing in support of funding for early learning programs and for SB 213. There are many children in Southern Oregon with high needs that interfere with their healthy development and their ability to be successful in school and later in life. These children often experience multiple risk factors such as poverty, developmental delays, social isolation, homelessness, physical and mental health problems, drug abuse, and domestic violence. We know, however, through experience as well as research that early screenings, medical care, good nutrition, educational and social experiences, mental health services, and family services and support can significantly improve children's healthy development and ability to learn and be successful in school and social relationships.

To provide the experiences and supports that children need, additional funding is needed to expand early childhood programs. This is more cost effective than later interventions when children are in public school. In addition, we need an approach that includes the entire community and can help generate creative solutions in the community, encourages efficiency and monitors the outcomes and results of programs and interventions. I believe the Early Learning Hubs provide this opportunity. As a member of the Southern Early Learning Services (SOELS) the Hub for Jackson and Josephine County I have seen a shift in collaboration and coordination of both the community of providers of services for young children and their families and in the wider community. This is a direct result of the many planning activities the partners have engaged in over the past few years. There is greater recognition of the importance of early learning and the importance of including families. One example is that public schools and early learning providers are coordinating and planning transitions on a scale never done here. There is mutual respect and they are sharing expectations, training, and resources. Parents, who are included in SOELS, are being recognized as important partners by more public schools. Another example is greater coordination and collaborations with the Coordinated Care Organizations to ensure comprehensive health services, including screenings and preventative care for young children.

I appreciate your consideration of early learning services and the early learning hubs and thank you for your work.

Sincerely,

Nancy S. Nordyke  
Head Start Director  
Southern Oregon Head Start

