

Date: March 19, 2015

To: Chair Gelser and members of the Senate Human Services and Early Childhood Committee.
Re: SB 213

I am Judy Newman wearing two hats in this hearing one is as the Co-director of Early Childhood CARES, the early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ECSE) program in Lane County and the other is as a member of the leadership and Governance of the Lane Early Learning Alliance, Lane County's early learning hub.

At the state level, over the past 3 years the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) for EI/ECSE and the Early learning Council have engaged in a thoughtful process of identifying ways to enhance coordination and inclusion of the children served in EI/ECSE programs into the broader early learning system. This resulted in concrete and doable recommendations many of which are already being implemented.

At the local level, It is important to know that EI/ECSE programs are involved with the development and implementation of early learning hubs in all communities across Oregon-- often in leadership positions.

I want to highlight two specific areas of collaboration between EI/ECSE programs and early learning hubs that have been rich experiences in cooperation and shared goals and beneficial to kids, families and providers.

My first example is in the area of early developmental screening and linking children to services. Early learning hubs have a shared metric with CCOs to increase the rates of developmental screening for children under 3 years of age. This is fantastic! It means that children who need help are being identified earlier and earlier and referred to services that will provide help. EI/ECSE programs receive referrals from physicians when a developmental delay is suspected or identified. EI/ECSE programs have already seen increases in referrals and anticipate more.

In Early Childhood CARES over the past 4-5 years, EI age children (birth to 3 years old) have accounted for 22-24% of the total number of birth to 5 year old children we serve. Based on this past December census count, EI children accounted for 34% of the children we serve. This represents a 10-12% increase over last year. This indicates we are finding children earlier. The increase in EI referrals matches the increases we are seeing each quarter in the rates of children screened by physicians under the age of 3 in Lane County as reported by Trillium our CCO.

The same increases in EI age referrals are being reported in most other areas across the state. And statewide the number of EI age children is increasing faster than the