



April 10, 2015

Representative Margaret Doherty, Chair
Members of the House Education Committee
900 Court St. NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Doherty and Representatives,

Children First wants Oregon to be the best place to be a kid. We strive to make change by advocating for policies and programs that keep children healthy and safe while providing opportunities to allow each to succeed.

For Oregon to meet its stated 40-40-20 goal and achieve a 100% high school graduation rate by 2025, we need a strong education at all levels. Early learning programs have been proven to prepare children for Kindergarten, close achievement gaps, and boost lifetime earnings for participants. By helping children at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, we take an enormous step to achieving our goals.

HB 3380 with the dash 2 amendment will not only improve access but it will ensure quality improvements by mandating number of school hours, requiring coordination with other services, dictating minimum requirements for teachers, and several other quality measures. This legislation will provide improvements over the short term and with oversight and evaluation requirements, promises long term improvements as well.

Numerous studies have shown that early education investments in children pay off for both the child and the state. A large study in Oklahoma demonstrated the largest benefits of pre-kindergarten classes are enjoyed by underrepresented minority students.¹ In another study, participating children are more prepared for school and earn as much as 19% more during their careers.²

Children First wishes to thank the Oregon Head Start Association, The Children's Institute, and the Early Learning Division for their collaborative work to develop this legislation. We urge you to fully fund the investment for mixed-use preschool in HB 5016 and the policy changes presented in the amended HB 3380.

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

¹ Gormley Jr., William T. and Deborah Philips. 2005. "The Effects of Universal Pre-K in Oklahoma: Research Highlight and Policy Implications." *Policy Studies Journal*, 33(1): 65-82

² Bartik, Timothy J. 2014. *From Preschool to Prosperity: The Economic Payoff to Early Childhood Education*. Kalamazoo, MI: W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research