



Cultivating Confident, Creative, Compassionate Leaders

HB3380

House Education Committee

April 8th, 2015

Dear Legislators,

For the record, I am Kali Thorne Ladd, Executive Director of KairosPDX and a member of the Early Learning Council. I am submitting testimony in support of HB3380 to support efforts to begin building a pre-school system that is innovative, research-based and supports children at their most critical age of development. Ultimately this is the economic investment that has the potential to yield the greatest return.

We already know what the data says:

- Oregon is in the bottom quarter of all states nationally for access to preschool for 4-year-olds, enrolling only 10 percent.
- The Oregon Head Start Pre-K program has funding to serve only about 55 percent of eligible children.
- Seventy-two percent of 3- and 4-year-olds from low- income Oregon families – about 32,000 children – don't have access to high-quality preschool.

We know this is unacceptable. We know this is antithetical to who we are as a state. If we are to be a better Oregon and achieve greater equity for all Oregonians, change must happen now. By implementing strategic measures to improve outcomes for kids and lay a foundation for future success educationally, economically and health wise- we are building a better Oregon. As a provider serving low-income children and children of color in Oregon, I can't underscore enough how much the challenges/problems we see in the K-12 system are systemically linked to the lack of investment in quality early learning experiences for all children.

I urge you to support HB3380 and this transformation of early learning in Oregon.

Kind regards,

Kali Thorne Ladd