

**Testimony of Janet Bauer, Policy Analyst
in Support of HB 2985 -1
before the House Early Childhood and Family Supports Committee
April 13, 2017**

Good afternoon, Chair Lively and members of the committee. My name is Janet Bauer. I am a policy analyst with the Oregon Center for Public Policy. We are a research organization with a mission to advance policies and practices that improve the economic and social opportunities of all Oregonians.

The Center supports HB 2985-1 to create a task force to examine the challenges in child care in Oregon for children, parents and providers, and recommend solutions.

I am here to talk about the research on the impacts of public investments in quality child care. I will briefly share about the impacts on children, parents and providers.

When a child has access to high-quality early child care, it increases his/her chances of success as an adult. Quality early learning programs have been shown to support a child's emotional and social growth as well as their cognitive development. These positive impacts have lifelong benefits. Specifically, quality early child care has been shown to boost a child's subsequent academic performance, educational attainment, job prospects, and lifetime earnings. Quality care also improves lifetime health outcomes.

The research also shows the benefits of quality early child care for parents. Affordable, quality child care enables parents to maintain economic stability, return to the workforce earlier and remain there longer. Parents with access to financial assistance for quality care have fewer missed days from work and greater job retention. Access to quality early child care also helps parents further their own education and training, which translates into higher earnings.

Public investments in child care also benefit providers and improve the quality of care. Research has found that subsidies are associated with lower levels of economic distress and depression among the otherwise low wage workforce.

Quality, affordable child care is not a challenge just for low-income families. It is a problem for middle-income households as well.

Clearly, a plan for substantially investing in child care is needed. There are about 146,000 children currently eligible for Oregon's ERDC program. We serve only about 11 percent of them. If Oregon were to extend assistance to middle-income households, we would need to plan to cover about twice as many children as are eligible for ERDC today.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration and support of HB 2985-1.