

To: Senate Education Committee
From: Dana Hepper, Director of Policy & Program, Children's Institute
Date: May 4th, 2017
Re: Vote yes on HB 3106-A

Chair Roblan and members of the committee, my name is Dana Hepper. I am the Director of Policy & Program at the Children's Institute. Children's Institute is a statewide organization that advocates for investments in young children that will improve Kindergarten Readiness and Third Grade Success. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

The Children's Institute supports HB 3106-A and asks you to move the bill. The bill does two simple things:

- Ensures that Early Learning Hubs convene and coordinate preschool providers in their region,
- Increases flexibility of the Oregon Prekindergarten funds.

We support both efforts. Clarifying the important convening and coordination role of the Early Learning Hubs aligns with the vision for Hubs outlined at their conception. Increasing the flexibility of OPK funds to be used for half or full day programs makes them easier to blend with Head Start, Preschool Promise, and other funding streams to best meet the needs of children and families in any given community.

We would like to quickly get on the record two clarifying points that have been a part of the conversations leading to this legislation:

First, the intent of the partners is to maintain parent choice when selecting a preschool for their child, while ensuring consistent and clear communication with families about the differences between preschools that will help them make the most informed decision. Representatives from state-funded preschool programs can talk about specific families to see which program could be the best to connect with the family and ensure they get enrolled, but this does not pre-empt parent choice for a family that may qualify both for Head Start and Preschool Promise.

Second, Hub collaboration may look different depending on the region. Some hubs may be sharing waiting lists, centralized or common registration processes, and parent outreach efforts. Some hubs may get together to divide the region and wouldn't need on-going coordination at the same level. We believe the proposed language leaves room for both scenarios and others.

We're excited about the efforts this session to modify and improve the Preschool Promise statute.