



House Committee on Early Childhood and Family Supports
Re: HB 4066, Early Childhood Equity Fund

February 6, 2018

Chair Lively and fellow committee members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in strong support of House Bill 4066 to establish an Early Childhood Equity Fund. My name is Jenny Lee, and I am the Advocacy Director at the Coalition of Communities of Color, a coalition of 19 culturally-specific organizations dedicated to cross-cultural, collective action for racial equity. The Coalition of Communities of Color's mission is to address the socioeconomic disparities, institutional racism, and inequity of services experienced by our families, children and communities; and to organize our communities for collective action resulting in social change to obtain self-determination, wellness, justice and prosperity.

High-quality early childhood education lays the foundation for educational and family success. Many Coalition of Communities of Color member organizations offer high quality, culturally-specific early learning programs and services to communities and could be eligible for this funding. These programs result in strong educational outcomes for children and families of color. But despite their proven track record, these community-based programs are currently not eligible for state resources.

HB 4066 would address this gap by establishing an Early Childhood Equity Fund to invest in culturally-specific early learning, early childhood, and parent support programs in Oregon. To be eligible, an organization must have a record of providing culturally-specific early learning programs, with a history of successful outreach, support, and resources to underserved children and families. By drawing on the cultural experiences of their community, these programs equip children with the skills they need to successfully enter kindergarten.

Oregon's growing diversity means that we need to begin investing now in the future of all of our children by meeting their cultural and linguistic needs. We must ensure that culturally-specific stakeholders are formally incorporated into the state's early learning system, recognizing them for the important role they play in supporting families and closing the opportunity gap for children of color.

On behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color, I urge you to take action to ensure that every child in Oregon receives a strong start to their education and identify new opportunities for children who would most benefit from high-quality culturally-specific early learning programs.

Thank you,
Jenny Lee

On Behalf of the Coalition of Communities of Color

