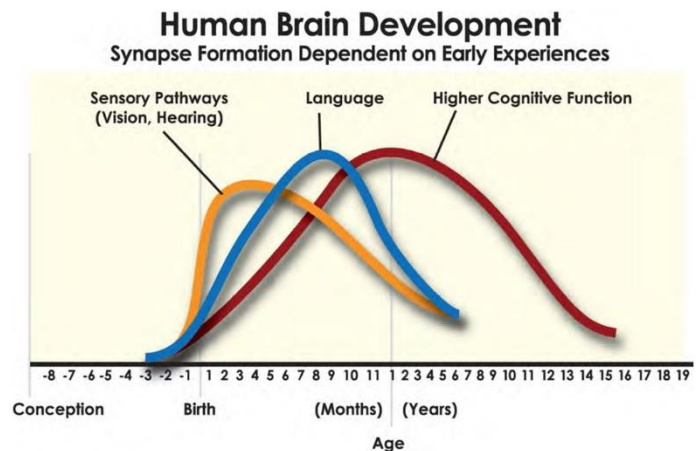


To: Senate Committee on Health Care
From: Dana Hepper, Director of Policy & Program, Children's Institute
Date: Tuesday, February 20th, 2018
Re: Support Access to Sound for Children who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing (HB 4104)

Children are born learning. They experience their most significant brain development during the first eight years of life. The quality of young children's experiences during this time sets the foundation for all future learning. Access to rich early learning experiences are beneficial to all children, and are especially beneficial for English language learners, children of color, and children who live in low-income households.

Early brain development, in the first two years of life, is an especially critical window for vision, hearing, and vocabulary development. This is the time when the synapses that support functioning in these areas form most rapidly and are the most responsive to effective intervention.

This is part of why Oregon has wisely focused on conducting early screenings on children across multiple domains. But screenings only identify potential challenges. To make our commitment to screening pay off, Oregon must double down on our efforts to deliver the interventions children need to maximize healthy development in these early years.



For children who are deaf or hard of hearing, effective hearing aids and/or Cochlear implants and supportive services are essential, especially in the earliest years of their development.

Early intervention with effective services ensures we maximize the potential of every child. In addition, effective intervention stabilizes families and reduces other public costs in education, health care, and lost taxes from lower lifelong wages. Providing better coverage for proven interventions is a common-sense step. We urge you to support House Bill 4104.