

Testimony before the House Committee on Education

Oregon State Legislature

March 4, 2019

My name is Yadira Juarez. Today I am here to ask you to pass the proposal to increase funding for culturally specific early childhood education programs.

I have three children. In 2002, my oldest son was 3 years old and he received early childhood services. In this program my son developed his social-emotional, math, and physical skills.

As a mother, I wasn't able to provide this support to him before this program where my son and I attended and I learned how to help him learn at home, also this was because the program was in my culture, in my language, and at an early age. Thanks to this program my son is one of the fortunate ones to have graduated high school and attend college. Oregon has a low graduation rate of 78% and as a mother and from my experience I can validate that the statistics are correct in that 90% of child development starts from 0-5 years of age. This gives us the answer as to why our children start Kindergarten with little or no preparation and that currently many of our families don't have the skills and the tools in their language to help their children learn at home, and they don't have the opportunity like I had to receive culturally specific early childhood programs.

By approving the culturally specific Equity Fund, together we can increase the percentage of graduation of our children and give the opportunity for access to multicultural early childhood programs in Oregon. I ask you once more to pass HB 2897.

Thank you.