



Testimony from Oregon Community Foundation in support of the Governor's recommendations for funding for early learning and family support in the Oregon Department of Education budget.

Submitted by Mary Louise McClintock, OCF Director of Education Programs

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, Members of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education:

Oregon Community Foundation (OCF) has invested in early childhood care and learning for nearly three decades. Closing the opportunity gap for Oregon's children is OCF's highest priority. And early childhood is a key focus for our grantmaking and other efforts because we know that the birth to five years are the time when we have the greatest potential to address the opportunity gap – and when our dollars yield the best return on investment.

We applaud the comprehensive approach to well-being of young children reflected in the Governor's recommended budget for 2019-2021, as well as in the recommendations from the Joint Committee for Student Success and the Early Childhood Advocacy Coalition (of which OCF is a member). These recommendations are founded on understanding of what research tells us is effective as well as deep knowledge about the needs of children and families across the state.

We believe all the proposed early care and learning investments are critical but want to specifically call out recommendations for funding of effective strategies to support and engage parents as their children's first and most important teachers – including Relief Nurseries, Healthy Families Oregon, Reach Out and Read, and community-based parenting education programs through the Oregon Parenting Education Collaborative (OPEC). OCF is one of four foundations that together have invested more than \$14 million through OPEC to expand access to high quality parenting education programs. OPEC results to date include: regional parenting education hubs (all of which are either aligned with or co-housed with early learning hubs) now reach 32 of 36 counties; nearly 10,000 parents have attended evidence-based class series funded by OPEC; parents who participate in classes report significant improvements in their parenting skills and confidence, and most also say it is their perception that their children's behavior has improved as a result.

However, OPEC programs have so far reached only a fraction of Oregon parents who could benefit. State dollars allocated to this existing infrastructure can quickly expand its reach by leveraging private, local government and nonprofit funding, expertise and community partnerships that have already had life-changing impacts for many families of varied circumstances.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony, and please consider me to be a resource as you consider this important part of the budget: mlmclintock@oregoncf.org, 503-227-6846