

March 5, 2019

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative McLain, and members of the Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education:

As a teacher educator, former elementary teacher, parent, and member of the Yamhill Community Care Organization (YCCO) Early Learning Council, I am deeply invested in the lives of young children and their families. As the higher education representative on the YCCO, I have seen how important funding is for young children in our county. Every month, I join other representatives from our county's six school districts, leaders of local non-profits that serve young children (e.g., Lutheran Community Services, SMART, Head Start), and other key community members (e.g., pediatrician and child abuse prevention physician, public health director, public librarian) as we meet to share about upcoming programs, prioritize resources, analyze data, coordinate resources, and work collaboratively to make a dent in the ever growing needs of families in our county. As a member of the early learning council for over four years, I've seen firsthand the difference early learning funding makes in the lives of children their families, and our community.

I urge the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education to prioritize early learning funding in the next biennium budget. Research has shown time and time again that when we invest in young children and families the long-term benefits far outweigh the initial investment. Oregon legislators has a real opportunity to impact in the future outcomes for our most vulnerable citizens and their communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mindy L Larson".

Mindy Legard Larson, PhD
Professor and Education Department Chair, Linfield College
Higher Education Representative, YCCO Early Learning Council
milarson@linfield.edu
503.883.2203