

March 29, 2021

Chair Frederick, Chair McLain, and Members of the Joint Ways & Means  
Subcommittee On Education

My name is Kevin Burns and I work for Lane County Public Health and I am writing you today to ask the Oregon Legislature to increase funding for Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) for the 2021-2023 biennium. I currently co-chair the Lane County Home Visiting Innovation Team, and collaborated with Healthy Families program in my previous job as an Early Childhood Mental Health Therapist back when the program was called healthy Start, and know they do a wonderful job helping at-risk families and encourage good parent skills. I know, however, too many families are left without these first support services. Last year, HFO served over 2,000, but almost 600 families who qualified and requested services were left out of the program due to a lack of resources and funding. Their services are even more important right now due to the ongoing pandemic that has increased stress on new parents. It is far better to invest in families early than pay a bigger price later.

Please increase funding for Healthy Families Oregon by \$10 million and support the broad continuum of early childhood services by increasing a total early learning spending by \$127 million over current service levels.

Thank you,

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