



Testimony  
Oregon Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education  
Early Learning Budget Hearing – SB 5513  
Re: Healthy Families Oregon  
March 29, 2021

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

On behalf of the board and partners of Prevent Child Abuse Oregon (PCAO), we wish to offer testimony in support of Healthy Families Oregon (HFO) – a critical primary prevention program and community-based initiative. We request that HFO's funding level be increased to a total of \$10 million for the 2021-23 biennium. This requested increase is essential to serve additional families and re-establish an effective database. Moreover, additional funds will also support pay parity as discussed with Oregon Relief Nurseries.

In addition, PCAO is advocating for the full \$127 million investment proposed by the Early Childhood Coalition to increase access to inclusive, culturally specific & relevant, developmentally appropriate early childhood programs, acknowledging that this includes the \$10 million for Healthy Families Oregon.

#### About PCAO

PCAO's mission is to strengthen families to prevent child abuse and neglect. We do this by engaging communities and individuals, in both public and private organizations and by advocating for child abuse prevention policy at all levels. PCAO believes in supporting the entire continuum of 0-18 yrs. with all essential supports and investments required for success. We embrace a vision where all children live in safe nurturing homes and supportive communities regardless of race, class, culture, or geography.

#### About HFO

HFO is an accredited multi-site state system of Healthy Families America (HFA), and it is Oregon's largest child abuse prevention program with 16 sites covering the state. It is a free family support and parent education home visiting program that is voluntary and focuses on strengthening the parent-child relationship to assure healthy child growth and development. Home visitors support parents in cultivating and strengthening a nurturing, positive relationship with their baby at each visit. HFO's dedicated staff works tirelessly to provide critical support even during this challenging time. For PCAO, the work of HFO is foundational if we are to achieve our vision of safe nurturing homes and supportive communities.

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Mary Ratliff, Project Coordinator  
*Protect Our Children*

#### Mission

*Strengthening families to prevent child abuse and neglect.*

#### Vision

*All children live in safe homes and supportive communities, regardless of race, class, culture or geography.*



Health Family programs have numerous benefits:

- Cost-benefit analyses show that high quality home visiting programs offer returns on investment ranging from \$1.75 to \$5.70 for every dollar spent due to reduced costs of child protection, K-12 special education and grade retention, and criminal justice expenses. (Source: National Conference of State Legislatures)
- Many Healthy Families programs operate integrally with Relief Nurseries, an effective partnership with evidence of success.
- National policy initiatives that promote information gathered from the Adverse Childhood Experiences substantiates the efficacy of Healthy Families and home visiting; it is one of the few proven, evidence-based investments in prevention.

Your past support of child abuse prevention efforts has allowed Oregon's Healthy Families programs to consistently work with approximately 2000 families, but there remains a gap of over 600 families who are not receiving services due to lack of resources. Additionally, research indicates that the wake of the COVID-19 crisis will continue to adversely impact our state's most vulnerable families and, in turn, our communities for years to come. But we can avoid what might otherwise become a devastating decade-long impact by increasing critical child abuse prevention programs today. It is for these reasons that PCAO requests your increase support HFO.

Thank you for your full and fair consideration, your leadership, and your support of Oregon's children and families.

Kind Regards,

Mickey Lansing, Board Chair  
Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

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