

April 14, 2021

To: Joint Committee on Ways & Means
From: Zakkiyya Ibrahim, Tigard
Re: Funding child care

Dear Tri-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield and Members of the Committee:

My name is Zakkiyya Ibrahim and I live in Tigard, OR. I own two Certified Family home child care programs, Education Explorers, a SPARKS 5 stars rated program and newly opened, Omolaso Preschool and Childcare. Prior to opening my programs I obtained a BS in Family Life and Early Childhood Development in 2006 and recently completed a MA in Special Education specializing in Applied Behavior Analysis with an Emphasis in Autism. I hold a Step 11 in the Oregon Registry and provide high quality culturally competent care and education to the children in my program and community. Although I have only owned my own childcare program for three and a half years in Oregon. I have a total of 12 years working in the Early Education field from teaching in the classroom, providing in-home early intervention services, as well as, management.

Between my two CF programs I'm licensed to serve 28 children between the ages of 8 weeks to 6 years. My student demographic consists of more than 75% African American children and families. 95% of my student population fall under the 200% FPL with many qualifying for ERDC. In my experience working with families using the ERDC program, I have seen where families have had to choose between working full time versus part time or whether to accept a pay increase or not in fear of having their copays increased or of losing their ERDC or other benefit all together. When families are forced to reduce their hours after a small raise this results in reduced financial income for the family, reduced days the child(ren) attend their program and breaks continuity of learning for the child. This upon other reasons is why we must fund HB 3073 and protect our state funding for the ERDC program.

I also support this bill because it supports providers and families as follows.

- Lower copays for families = greater financial stability
- Compensation for enrollment vs attendance. Therefore providing continuance of care for families and financial stability for providers. This is what my program expects from private pay families and what is afforded to the k-12 system.
- Increased pay for care beyond non-standard care hours. Which provides families with care that work jobs that are beyond the 9-5 and compensates providers for the type of care. As a provider that prior to COVID had children in care from 4am to 10pm six days a week. This is greatly appreciated.
- Increased pay for culturally diverse or linguistically diverse providers and programs allowing children and families to have access to programs that closely align with their cultures, language or values. As the only African American program in Washington County, having my programs as a safe haven for children and families in African American community is extremely important to help children build a positive foundation and view of school and education to help disrupt the School to prison pipeline.

In closing, I support this bill because it finally shows me that my education, efforts, and program matter. I support HB 3073 because our field deserves their own specialized entity with the Department of Early Learning and Care. They both highlight that early education is

just that...education not babysitting. That early education matters and that we are appreciated.
And I have always said the best form of appreciation is through compensation.

Sincerely,
Zakkiyya Ibrahim