

My name is Valerie Edwards and I work for the Healthy Families program for Linn & Benton counties. I manage the data for the program for these two counties and screen families to see if they are eligible for services. In my role, I have a unique opportunity to hear many of the stories of the struggles families in our community face, while also seeing the data behind the Healthy Families program and how it helps families we serve.

I speak with parents who talk about their stressors as parents, many of whom are new to parenting. Healthy Families Oregon is unique because it offers support to these families, starting when these families are still pregnant through age 3. The Home Visitors build bonds with these families over the years they work together -- years spent supporting new parents, providing parent skill building, increasing school readiness, and helping connect families to other community resources they may need. Investing in this program continues to strengthen families and children in our communities.

We ask for your support to expand the Early Childhood Coalition's agenda for a \$127 million increase to fund Early Learning programs to advance racial equity, expand early childhood investments, and strengthen the childcare system for working families.

Thank you.