

Hello,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony. My name is Stacy Lorette. I am the Program Director for Community Action Resource Enterprises in Tillamook County and as a part of my job I function as the assistant program manager for NW OR Healthy Families in Tillamook County.

I am writing in support of Early Childhood Education programs in the State of Oregon and specifically on behalf of the Healthy Families program, a home visiting program for pregnant moms and parents with children ages 0-3. Healthy Families is a primary support for some of our most vulnerable Oregonians: those experiencing poverty, maternal depression and other mental health issues, domestic violence, substance abuse, or other significant life stressors and specifically for those who are age 0- 3 years of age.

The DHS Child Welfare data book for 2019 reports the 0-3 population has the highest number of founded child welfare cases in our tri-county region (Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook). In addition, out of 23 fatalities statewide due to abuse and neglect, 17 (73.9 %) were age 5 and younger, and 12 (53%) were age 1 or younger, demonstrating the vulnerability of this age group. As a former Child Welfare supervisor, I have witnessed the difference that the Healthy Families program makes in the lives of families and children in Tillamook county, and this is also the reason I joined Healthy Families as a Program Manager in 2011.

Healthy Families is an evidence based practice that has been **proven** to increase school readiness, access to medical care and to reduce child abuse and neglect. We have the honor of working with families who can significantly benefit from extra support and information during this critical time of growth and development in a child's life.

Regionally, current services available to families with children age 0-3 are Healthy Families, Public Health Nurses and Early Intervention. They are limited at best. Healthy Families is the only program, that is not based on specific health or developmental concerns regarding the child, in order to enroll in services.

These are the reasons we, at Healthy Families, continue to do this important work. The program is asking that you continue to support the youngest and most vulnerable Oregonians and fully fund and expand with new growth for the Healthy Families program and our 0-3 population.

Thank you for your service to all Oregonians and for taking the time to read my testimony.

Sincerely,

Stacy Lorette, MSW
CARE Director of Programs
Social Services Division