



January 31, 2022

RE: HB 4005 & \$100 million child care investment package

Dear Legislators,

Oregon's children ages 0-5 are the most racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse Oregonians, and they are the group of Oregonians most likely to live in poverty. While children have not faced the primary impact of getting sick from COVID-19, they have encountered some of the greatest secondary impacts at a time when their brains are rapidly developing. Early childhood experiences set the stage for complex neural, social, and emotional development, making early childhood a critical window in which to eliminate disparities.

For these reasons, the Early Childhood Coalition urges the legislature to make progress on child care in the 2022 legislative session. House Bill 4005 and related investments in child care provide critical support for child care providers and families. We know that:

- Women and women of color provide most of the child care in Oregon, and they are among the lowest-paid workers in Oregon. In 2018, the median wage of preschool teachers, many of whom are college-educated, was \$13.95 an hour, and was \$11.86 for child care workers in Oregon. Average annual wages in child care are about half the all-industry Oregon average.¹
- Working parents account for 31% of our labor force². If a third of our state can't consistently and reliably show up to work, we're in big trouble.

Children thrive when they have stable, inclusive, culturally relevant child care and when their families have stable and adequate incomes.

In 2021, the Early Childhood Coalition supported HB 3073 which made needed reforms to the state's child care subsidy program, Employment Related Day Care (ERDC). This was an important step, and we need to continue to make progress to restore and build the child care system Oregon's children, families, providers, and employers need.

HB 4005 will:

- Support providers and child care affordability for subsidy-eligible families by increasing subsidy rates to the 90th percentile of the 2020 child care market rate.
- Support Oregon's child care systems development through HB 3073 Implementation with increased capacity to stand up the new Department of Early Learning and Care.

Additionally, the related child care investment package will increase child care slots through investing in new provider grants, strengthening our state's Child Care Resource & Referral

¹ <https://familyforwardoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FFO-Child-Care-Report-2019-REV.pdf>

² [https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/for-oregon-parents-working-is-the-norm#:~:text=How%20much%20of%20the%20workforce,to%20the%20nation%20\(33%25\)](https://www.qualityinfo.org/-/for-oregon-parents-working-is-the-norm#:~:text=How%20much%20of%20the%20workforce,to%20the%20nation%20(33%25))

Centers, and sending direct relief payments to the child care workforce. Without investing in new providers and helping existing providers expand, we are unable to meet current demands and will be even further behind when implementing new state, and likely federal, expanded eligibility to child care subsidies.

The Early Childhood Coalition asks you to support this legislation and investment package. In your work on child care in 2022 and implementation, we ask you to ensure these investments result in child care expansion in Oregon's most rural/remote areas, including communities that have been impacted by wildfires. We would like to ensure child care providers in rental homes can benefit from this investment. Finally, we appreciate this legislation and investment package being crafted thoughtfully to get resources into communities across Oregon as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Act Early Oregon
Blue Mountain Early Learning Hub
Children's Institute
Early Learning Hub of Central Oregon
Early Learning Hub of Linn, Benton & Lincoln Counties
Early Learning Multnomah
Early Learning Washington County
FACT Oregon

IRCO:

- Africa House
- Pacific Islander and Asian Family Center
- Slavic and Eastern European Center
- Greater Middle East House

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
Metropolitan Family Service
Nurse-Family Partnership
NW Early Learning Hub
Oregon Coalition of Local Health Officials
Oregon Head Start Association
Oregon Pediatric Society
Reach Out and Read Northwest
ReadyNation
South-Central Early Learning Hub
United Way of the Columbia-Willamette