

Submitter: Ilana Jakubowski
On Behalf Of: Outdoor Preschool Licensure Bill
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure: HB2717

I am writing in strong support of Oregon's adoption of a path to licensure for outdoor preschools. I have worked in the early education field for over 18 years, in a variety of settings including outdoor preschools. I hold a Masters in Social Work, and have been the Program Director for a preschool serving families who are unhoused for over 5 years, thus I have a well-rounded understanding of the critical early education needs faced by marginalized populations.

Outdoor preschools provide the equitable, therapeutic environment that is so desperately needed in the current early education landscape. Allowing outdoor preschools to become licensed would standardize best practices in the field, allow for more children to be served, and break down barriers in facility costs for program operators. Additionally, I have witnessed firsthand the therapeutic benefits of providing outdoor early education, particularly for children with high levels of trauma and/or social-emotional needs. Many early educators can attest to the fact that children who display disruptive behavior are often transformed when they switch to an outdoor environment.

Expanding paths to licensure for all early educators, including outdoor preschools, will address the current childcare crisis and result in long-term financial and societal benefits.