



2 March 2023

Oregon Joint Committee on Ways & Means
Subcommittee on Education
900 Court St NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair Frederick, Chair McLain, and members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means Subcommittee on Education,

I am writing in support of the important investments in early childhood that are included in House Bill 5013 on the Department of Early Learning and Care Budget.

As the Government Affairs Manager for Nurse-Family Partnership, I support our 8 home visiting programs serving families across 9 counties in the state. Over the last 24 years, we have partnered Oregon families with nurses beginning during pregnancy and continuing until the child is two years old to empower these families to realize better pregnancy outcomes, improved child development, and greater economic self-sufficiency.

In writing to you today, I am asking for your help not specifically for Nurse-Family Partnership, but on behalf of other programs in Oregon due to our support for the strength of our home visiting and early childhood systems as a whole. No one model or program is the best fit for all families. There is strength in having a portfolio of options so that we are able to achieve the aim of targeted universalism by providing all Oregon families with the best type of support for their needs.

Nurse-Family Partnership collaborates on a local and statewide level in supporting families with Healthy Families Oregon and Relief Nurseries. Currently, both of these programs are engaging with the legislature to ask for further investment into their essential home visiting services to Oregon families. Specifically, Nurse-Family Partnership supports the following asks:

- A **\$21.1 million increase to Relief Nurseries** to increase access to services that improve family resilience and prevent abuse and neglect of young children.



- A **\$14.4 million increase to Healthy Families Oregon** to support parents and give their new babies the love and support they need to thrive.

Because of the huge impact that investments in early childhood have on early brain development, health and wellbeing of children, families, and communities, and the broader economic wellbeing of our state, Nurse-Family Partnership is also supportive of the following investments in House Bill 5013:

- **At least 10% increases above Current Service Level to all Early Learning Division programs** to better align with the true costs of providing these programs. A significant portion of these funds should go to increasing compensation for the skilled professionals, mostly women and women of color, who work with young children and families. We also support investments to pilot needed improvements to programs, including supporting inclusive practices to ensure children with disabilities and delays can fully participate; community transportation innovations; and extending school year programming into the summer.
- **A \$10 million increase to the Early Childhood Equity Fund** to increase access to effective culturally specific early learning services.
- As close to a **\$250 million investment in child care subsidy** (Employment Related Day Care, ERDC) as possible. This investment is a needed critical step toward addressing Oregon's child care crisis, support providers to offer quality care for children, ensure families can work and take care of their families, and support Oregon's economy.
- At least a **\$100 million investment in early childhood facilities**. We recognize this investment is likely to be in another agency's budget, but we ask Committee members to advocate for these investments, and ensure HB 5013 includes any resources the Department of Early Learning and Care may need to serve as a partner to those efforts.
- Finally, **the Department of Early Learning and Care must receive the resources, FTE, and tools they need to deliver these needed investments to communities**, where they make the greatest difference. It is essential that we set this agency up to succeed from the start.



I am happy to connect further at any time. Thank you for the leadership you provide in preserving and strengthening our early childhood services in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Matthew Richardson
Government Affairs Manager
The National Service Office for Nurse-Family Partnership and Child First
matthew.richardson@nursefamilypartnership.org
360-764-0991