



**EARLY LEARNING
MULTNOMAH**

3/2/2023

RE: Department of Early Learning and Care Budget (HB 5013)

Distinguished Legislators,

HB 5013 represents a significant moment for Oregon's future - the first budget for a new state agency focused on Oregon's youngest children and their families. This budget is truly an investment in Oregon's future.

It will also be critical for Ways & Means Education Subcommittee to look across Education budgets and work in collaboration with other subcommittees to promote investments in young children across state agencies such as scholarships for early childhood educators in Higher Education Coordinating Commission and funding Nurse Family Partnership in Oregon Health Authority.

As a partner in the Early Childhood Coalition, our early learning hub in Multnomah County supports investments in Oregon's early childhood **workforce, facilities** infrastructure, and increasing **access** to quality programs - especially access to culturally specific services funded by the Early Childhood Equity Fund, programs that support strong families, including Relief Nurseries and Healthy Families Oregon, and childcare.

It is critical that this budget makes needed investments in Oregon's early learning and care **workforce**. We have to compensate these professionals in alignment with the value they bring to our society - including both pay and benefits. This means ensuring that every program receives a minimum 10% increase in the cost per child above current service level to better reflect the true cost of care and ensure the bulk of these funds result in compensation increases for the women and women of color who make up most of the workforce.

This budget must continue to increase **access to quality services** that meet the varied needs of families in Oregon's mixed-delivery system. Essential investments in access include:

- \$10 million to grow **culturally specific early childhood services** that over-delivered, even during a global pandemic. This is our priority ask.
- \$21.1 million for Relief Nurseries and \$14.4 million for Healthy Families Oregon - critical investments in programs proven to prevent child abuse and create safe, stable families.



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- As close as possible to \$250 million for child care (called for in DELC POP 102) to take a step toward addressing Oregon's child care crisis, support quality care for children, ensure families can work and take care of their families, and support Oregon's economy.

Oregon must simultaneously invest in early childhood **facilities infrastructure**. Although we understand those funds may not come through this budget, we want this committee to know that is an essential ingredient that must be financed this session for our workforce and access investments to be successful.

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.

Sincerely,

Molly Day

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