



March 2, 2023

TO: Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education  
FROM: Our Children Oregon  
RE: Support for HB 5013, DELC Budget

Dear Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is advancing equitable policymaking and whole-child advocacy statewide to ensure our children and youth—regardless of their race, identity, ability, or where they live—have what they need to thrive. We collect, analyze, and elevate data and research that, alongside lived experience, drives conversations in support of Oregon's future.

Oregon has made crucial investments for child care providers across the state. Although operating grants helped many child care businesses survive the height of the pandemic, Oregon has sustained a loss of about 20% of the pre-pandemic childcare slots. This has drastically increased the number of children and families who lack vital access to quality care. A 2021 statewide survey of over 200 providers indicated that financial support is still their most urgent need. The report estimates:

- The number of programs that serve 100+ children has decreased by 64%.<sup>1</sup>
- 33% have not been able to rehire staff who were laid off or furloughed.<sup>2</sup>
- Of the 40% of programs that are still open, they are only operating at 76% capacity compared to pre-COVID numbers.<sup>3</sup>

**The stability of our economy and the well-being of Oregon children heavily depend on our efforts to continue investing in child care— not just for our children now, but for our shared future.** We strongly support HB 5013, funding the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELC), to increase access to quality early childhood services. Essential investments in access include:

- 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.
- \$10 million for the Early Childhood Equity Fund to grow and increase access to effective culturally-specific early learning programs.
- \$21.1 million for Relief Nurseries and \$14.4 million for Healthy Families Oregon, programs that are proven to prevent child abuse and create safe, stable families.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://childcarefororegon.org/survey>

<sup>2</sup> <https://childcarefororegon.org/survey>

<sup>3</sup> <https://childcarefororegon.org/survey>

- \$250 million for child care subsidy (Employment Related Day Care) in DELC POP #102 to take a step toward addressing Oregon’s child care crisis.
- \$100 million investment in early childhood facilities to ensure DELC has the necessary resources to serve as a partner in efforts to increase and expand facilities.
- Finally, the Department of Early Learning and Care must receive the resources, FTE, and tools they need to fully operate and deliver these much-needed investments to communities— where they make the greatest difference. It is essential that we set this agency up for success from the start.

**Investments in young children are a win for every Oregonian.** They support early brain development, health, and wellbeing of children, families, and communities, as well as strengthen our economy. We thank you for your time and your efforts to take the necessary steps to improve Oregon’s child care system and ensure every child has access to quality early learning and care. We urge your support for HB 5013.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

Ivy Major-McDowall, Policy and Advocacy Director

Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

View the 2023 Children’s Agenda at [www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda](http://www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2023-childrens-agenda)