



Update on the Early Childhood Workgroup and LC 211

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Representative Walters: Site Visit Observations

- During site visits, providers emphasized how administrative barriers impacted daily operations
- Providers are mission-driven but stretched thin by compliance requirements
- Delays in onboarding staff directly affect classroom quality and continuity for children
- Families often arrive confused about what programs exist and how they qualify

This bill responds directly to what providers and families are experiencing on the ground.





Representative Wise:

What providers are telling us

- Providers want to serve families but are frustrated by system inefficiencies
- Preschool and early learning slots sit empty while families remain on ERDC waitlists
- Providers spend time redirecting families who were never told about available programs Workforce challenges are real, duplicative background checks delay staffing and destabilize classrooms

This bill reflects what providers have consistently asked for: clearer pathways and less red tape.



Early Childhood Access in Oregon: A System That Families Must Navigate Alone

What we're hearing statewide:

- Families seeking child care or preschool encounter multiple entry points with inconsistent information
- ERDC applicants are often placed on waitlists without being informed of other publicly funded options
- Providers struggle to fill available slots while families wait
- Workforce barriers, including duplicative background checks, slow hiring and disrupt classrooms

Why this matters:

- Delays in access impact family stability, workforce participation, and child development
- Fragmented systems create inequities, particularly for rural families and families of color
- These are systems problems, not individual failures



Fragmentation: Creates Barriers for Families and Providers

ERDC Referral Gaps

- Families are referred to generalized hotlines before receiving tailored early learning options
- Programs like Preschool Promise, OPK, Baby Promise, and Head Start have openings families never hear about
- Early Learning Hubs and CCR&Rs are underutilized as direct connectors (HB 2452 (2025) did not pass)

Workforce Barriers

- Early learning educators working in school-based settings must complete multiple background checks
- Same safety standards, same OSP infrastructure, duplicative processes
- Results in hiring delays, staffing shortages, and lost instructional days



Targeted, Consensus-Based Fixes



Part 1: ERDC Referral Alignment

- Require standardized information on all publicly funded early learning and care programs before referral to 211
- Include Baby Promise and direct connections to Early Learning Hubs and CCR&R's
- Allow DELC to coordinate or delegate implementation with ODHS

Part 2: Background Check Alignment Review

- Direct DELC, ODE, and TSPC to review duplicative background check requirements
- Develop recommendations for streamlining and cross-agency recognition
- Protect child safety while improving workforce mobility

Bottom Line:

- Improves access without expanding eligibility
- Reduces administrative burden
- Helps families connect to care faster

Thank you

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