

Submitter: Elena Barreto  
On Behalf Of: Farm to School equipment Grant  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On  
Natural Resources  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5502

Co-Chairs Senator Frederick and Representative Levy and members of the  
Committee

I am writing on behalf of the Children's Institute to express our strong support for the Farm to School Equipment and Infrastructure Grant Program within the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget. This vital grant program provides essential funding for food producers and processors, helping them overcome barriers to selling their products to schools, childcare centers, and summer meal sites. By offering financial assistance for the purchase of necessary equipment and infrastructure, the program enables these producers to scale their operations to meet the specific requirements of these markets.

Childcare centers and schools have specific needs for product quantities, delivery schedules, storage, and food safety. Nutritious food is vital for early childhood development, and investing in early childhood supports, like SB 5502 can break poverty cycles and ensure long-term stability for families. Prioritizing children improves lives and reduces crisis-driven spending. With 90% of brain development occurring by age 5, early childhood nutrition is crucial for cognitive, physical, and emotional growth.

We strongly urge you to support the inclusion of \$1 million for this grant program in the Oregon Department of Agriculture's budget. Investing in this initiative is an investment in the health and well-being of our children, the sustainability of our local food systems, and the economic prosperity of our communities.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Elena Barreto,  
Children's Institute