

Submitter: Araceli Lopez
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB5006

Dear President Wagner, Speaker Fahey, Co-Chair Senator Lieber, and Co-Chair Representative Sanchez:

As a mother currently receiving Relief Nursery services with a great organization, Family Building Blocks I respectfully urge your support for the Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries' (OARN) request for an additional \$4.9 million above the Governor's Recommended Budget. This funding is essential to sustain services for over 2,300 children and families and expand access to up to 300 more children across the state. Oregon's 38 Relief Nurseries offer critical, wraparound services for children from birth to age five and their families, including Therapeutic Early Childhood classrooms, Outreach and Respite Child Care, Home Visiting, Parenting Education, and—in many cases—integrated substance use recovery and behavioral health support. These services work together to keep children safe, support parental success, and reduce abuse and foster care placements.

The Relief Nursery model is proven, effective, and fiscally responsible. With 95% of enrolled children able to remain safely with their families, the program reduces long-term costs by improving educational outcomes, reducing abuse and neglect, and decreasing reliance on publicly funded systems. Relief Nurseries operate through a public-private partnership, requiring at least a 25% community match for every state dollar, and deliver an estimated \$2–\$4 return on investment.

Unfortunately, the \$28.8 million included in the Governor's Recommended Budget falls short of meeting the rising demand and increasing costs. HB 3933 would provide the additional \$4.9 million needed to ensure Relief Nurseries can continue to respond to the evolving needs of Oregon families.

Without this additional support, Relief Nurseries will be forced to limit classroom capacity, maintain or expand waitlists, and delay critical staffing in outreach and home visiting programs—services that directly impact children's safety and long-term well-being.

We urge you to prioritize this modest but vital investment in the legislative budget to sustain and expand Relief Nursery services that strengthen families and protect young children across Oregon.

Sincerely,

Araceli Lopez