

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

**RE: Department of Early Learning & Care Budget Cut Scenarios**

Chairs Lieber & Sanchez and Members of the Committee,

**Child care and housing are families' top expenses. The ability of families to afford to live in our state hinges on our ability to make progress on these two cost drivers.**

Funding for child care and preschool help families afford to stay in Oregon and work.

The cuts in the 2.5% and 5% cuts scenarios for the Department of Early Learning and Care go in the wrong direction for Oregon's kids, families and our economy. And they pile on top of \$45 million (3% reduction from CSL) already made in 2025.

At the 2.5% cuts level:

- 102 children would lose access to Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten/Head Start.
- 120 children would lose access to Preschool Promise.
- Thousands of families will lose access to Employment Related Day Care by failing to address the shortfall.

At the 5% cuts level:

- 271 children would lose access to Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten/Head Start.
- 270 children would lose access to Preschool Promise.
- Another 216 families (400+ children) would lose access to Employment Related Day Care - in addition to the thousands impacted by the shortfall.

**Early experiences, good and bad, have a profound and lasting impact on brain development and life outcomes** - meaning these early years drive later state

revenue and spending. Funding for home visiting and family support programs provide proven, critical support to families at an acutely challenging time in their lives. They build babies' brains, stabilize families, and save the state money.

At the 2.5% cuts level:

- We would have to start closing Relief Nursery classrooms.

- 85 children would lose access to a culturally specific early learning program.

At the 5% cuts level:

- We would have to close additional Relief Nursery classrooms.
- Another 85 children would lose access to culturally specific early learning programs.

**Instead, Oregon needs to be restoring investments in these programs - not cuts.**

Specifically, to support children and families we call on Oregon legislators to:

- Restore funding for Oregon Prenatal to Kindergarten (to LAB levels) (DELC budget).
- Restore \$4 million in cuts to Preschool Promise to allow for adequate inflationary increases to contracts to ensure this program pencils out for providers (DELC budget).
- Restore \$1.2 million in cuts to Healthy Families Oregon to restore program cuts and inflationary increases (DELC budget).
- Restore \$0.5 million in cuts to Relief Nurseries to restore inflationary increases (DELC budget).
- Restore \$1.6 million to Nurse Family Partnership home visiting to protect capacity across Oregon (OHA budget).
- Fund the \$73-88 million shortfall in Employment Related Day Care to prevent thousands of families from losing access to care.

Our children don't have 2 or 4 years for us to figure this out. They will be starting Kindergarten by then. What do we want for the children who start Kindergarten in 2028 and 2029?

We recognize you face difficult decisions. We ask you to keep children and families and affordability for Oregon at the center of your decisions. This is possible with modest use of revenue and reserves.

Sincerely,

Adelante Mujeres

Ballmer Institute

Black Parent Initiative

Children's Institute

Early Learning Hub Association

FACT Oregon

Families First Child Care Center

The Flip Museum

Future Generations Collaborative

Happy Go Lucky Child Care

Healthy Families Oregon Coalition

IRCO

Kids Discovery Corner

Marion-Polk Early Learning Hub

Metropolitan Family Service

Neighborhood House

Neuromorphis, LLC

Northwest Regional ESD

Nurse-Family Partnership

Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries

ORAEYC

Oregon Head Start Association

Our Children Oregon

Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

Radical Nest

Reach Out & Read

Southern Oregon Early Learning

Services

Yamhill Community Care

