

My name is Tanya McNeill and I am the parent of a 12 year old with multiple disabilities including Trisomy 21, ADHD, anxiety and strongly suspected Autism with a PDA profile. I am deeply concerned about the proposal to remove the parental income disregard from Medicaid eligibility for children. This change would be absolutely devastating for children and their families. K-plan, which provides both OHP and Direct Support Professional hours helps keep children with disabilities healthy and safe in their homes. This change would push more families into poverty, endanger the health of children and make it impossible for many parents of children with disabilities to work. It would also undo Oregon's important commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities to stay in their homes with their families. This change risks pushing children with disabilities into institutional care if their families lack the support to keep them safe in their homes.

Due to his disabilities, my child is still in pull-ups. My child receives all of his nutrition from a baby bottle despite years of feeding therapy. While his interests and desired activities are often "age-appropriate," his self-care needs and his supervisory needs are still at a preschool level. He requires constant 1:1 support to be safe in our home and to safely attend community recreational activities. His disability related needs make it impossible to receive after school child care, summer camp, or other enrichment and child care supports that typical (non-disabled) children can participate in, without additional 1:1 support. His needs are not unusual in the population of children who qualify for K-Plan services. Our children are not accepted into typical child care or summer camp programs. DSP hours allow our children to be cared for in our homes where they are safe, and to participate in recreational programs and activities with the appropriate level of support. DSP support allows parents to pursue employment to support our families, to have time and space care for our homes and other dependents and to maintain our own well-being.

Even with DSP support, full employment for parents of children with disabilities is extremely challenging. Many families, including mine, forgo a second income due to their child's support needs and the inconsistency of DSP support even with Medicaid coverage. Without DSP support I do not think that parental employment is feasible. This change will push families who are already on the brink of financial instability over the edge and will push many others who are currently financially secure, able to pay taxes, and stay housed and employed into financial insecurity and poverty. My own family is at risk of this. Moreover, I am terrified that the elimination of the parental income disregard will lead to the institutionalization of more children with disabilities. This is a tragic and painful practice that we should not return to as a society.

Moreover, many children who qualify for K-plan due to intellectual and developmental disability have high medical needs. My son required open heart surgery at 4.5 months old. He had major abdominal surgery at age 7 and in 2024 required 4 sedated endoscopies to ensure that he could continue to safely feed orally. He is on multiple medications and requires a medical pediatric meal replacement by prescription in order to ensure that his nutritional needs are met. While my family does have private health insurance at the moment that covers all three of us, my son's secondary OHP coverage ensures that we don't have to pay our out of pocket max every year and ensures that he always has pull-ups when he needs them, the nutrition he needs to grow, and the medication he needs to stay healthy. More importantly, his K-Plan eligibility ensures that he has DSP support to participate in the community and be safe at home.

I love my son. He is clever and funny and observant. He loves music and movies and video games. He also requires a very high level of care and supervision to ensure his health and safety. I urge you to please maintain support for my son and for other Oregon children with disabilities and their families. Please do not remove supports for families who are already struggling to support our high needs children. Please do not reverse Oregon's commitment to keeping children with disabilities in their homes and to providing supports that allow them to participate fully in their communities.