



Southern Oregon
Early Learning Services

March 3, 2015

To State Legislators:

I am the Chair of the Southern Oregon Early Learning Services Executive Council, which governs the regional Early Learning Hub for Jackson and Josephine Counties. On behalf of the Council, the Hub's Director and I are writing to urge your support of permanent funding for Early Learning Hubs as specified in Senate Bill 213. We believe that Senate Bill 213 will positively impact the welfare and future success of all children in the region.

Early Learning Hubs have been, and can continue to be, instrumental in translating well-established research into service and action within their communities. That research (such as the evidence provided by James Heckman, Nobel Prize winning economist, in a December 2014 address to policy makers at a White House Summit) shows us that investment in young children, birth to age 5, offers communities a 10:1 lifelong return on that investment by way of improved health, greater academic success, enhanced skills for the work force, and a vibrant and healthy society.

In its short contracted history, Southern Oregon Early Learning Services (SOELS) has initiated a wide-range of projects and programs in response to the unique conditions within our region. The purpose of these activities is to achieve state identified outcomes of school readiness, family stability, and system efficiency and effectiveness. SOELS is engaging area service providers and programs to identify and coordinate resources and supports for these activities. Those collaborative partnerships are then bringing the resources to children throughout the region, including children and families previously underserved. SOELS is committed to making resources more available, more accessible, and more effective.

The following projects are a direct result of the efforts of the Southern Oregon Early Learning Hub:

- Partnerships with six elementary schools and their surrounding center and home based child care providers, which align early childhood services with kindergarten expectations in order to enhance kindergarten readiness and improve performance on the Kindergarten Assessment;
- Home Visiting Network, which provides information and support and parenting strategies for enhanced health and child development for those bringing services into the homes of young children and families; and
- Early Literacy Project, which provides books for families and child care centers in Josephine County and guidance for parents and teachers in helping children develop literacy.

Long-term success for these programs and partnerships is dependent on continued funding and will require legislative commitment to a long-term investment in young children. Thank you for your consideration in support of Senate Bill 213.

Sincerely,

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SOELS Executive Council

Mary-Curtis Gramley, Director
SOELS

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The Family Nurturing Center

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