

January 28, 2019

Senate Committee on Health Care
State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 526 – Family Connects

Chair Monnes Anderson and Senators,

Children First for Oregon represents the interests of Oregon's 880,000 children and believes that together, with communities and leaders across the state, we can build a state where all children thrive.

Offering a nurse or trained case worker to visit soon after the arrival of a new child is a service enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of families annually in the United States. Research on many home visiting programs have shown a financial benefit greater than the cost of the program. Home visiting programs protect children, help parents take responsibility, and are an investment with significant short and long term benefits.

Developed in Durham, North Carolina, Family Connects is a community wide service that offers many of these same benefits for entire communities. This program has been implemented in 23 jurisdictions in 12 states including Lincoln County here in Oregon. Measuring the decrease in emergency room visits by families in Durham compared to those before the program started shows Family Connects will more than pay for itself in the first year by this measure alone.

For this reason and others, numerous Children's Agenda partners have signed to support implementation of Family Connects here in Oregon. Given the importance, Universal Home Visiting is also a priority issue for the 2019 Children's Agenda. This voluntary program has benefits that we will see here among Oregon's youngest if implemented.

Sincerely,

James Barta
Strategic Director

Together we can build an Oregon where all children thrive.