

To: The House Housing and Human Services
Committee
From: Marianne Preble,
Re: Support of HB 2346, HB 2348, and HB 2024

Dear Chair Keny Guyer,

My name is Marianne Preble and I live in Gladstone, Oregon. I've been an Early Childhood Educator teaching in Clackamas and Multnomah Counties for ten years. I appreciate the opportunity to share my experience as a low-income mother and Early Childhood Educator.

When I became a mother, my family and I looked into the options of how we were going to be able to afford child care and for me to stay in the workforce. We discovered that without the discount I would receive working at a child care center, it wouldn't be financially beneficial to have me return to the workforce because daycare was so expensive. By having experience in Early Childhood Education, I was able to secure employment that offered a discount in tuition to staff. There were many other fields that I could have worked in that paid more and had better benefits, but in the end I decided to rejoin the Early Childhood Education workforce so my son could have access to the kind of education we wanted in a quality center that would prepare him for kindergarten.

I worked in the industry for seven years before being able to afford healthcare and have access to other benefits. To this day it brings me great distress to reflect on this experience as it turned out positively for my family but, I know that isn't the case for thousands of families in Oregon who currently do not have resources to help them in accessing quality Early Childhood Education for their dependents. One way I planned to overcome these feelings of distress was to find employment at a center that offered more inclusive payment options for families.

Years later I found myself teaching at a center that offered sliding scale tuition and a generous amount of Early Head Start, and Head Start availability to families who qualified. Within the year I was employed there I observed the company having to scale back on the amounts of Early Head Start, and Head Start spots. Within my cohort, two of the students' lost their spots and their families had to find different centers to enroll their dependents. I would like to believe that the children and their families overcame this obstacle and found quality Early Childhood Education and bonded well with their new teachers- attachment is essential to learning. Breaking the bonds between children and teachers could be detrimental to their development. It takes a significant amount of time for children, families, and teachers to develop profound, secure attachments needed to collaboratively make children's early years enriching and successful. I can confidently say lack of accessibility to or maintaining enrollment at a quality childcare is huge stressor for families and should be avoided to best cultivate a healthy, thriving society overall.

Sincerely, Marianne Preble