

# Joint Task Force on Access to Quality and Affordable Child Care

---

Dana Hepper, Director of Policy & Advocacy, Children's Institute

Elanna Yalow, Chief Academic Officer, KinderCare Education

Marie Simonds, Executive Director, Wild Rivers Coast Alliance

Child Care

Problems &

COVID-19

Pandemic

## Oregon's child care system isn't working for...

...**Children.** We provide inconsistent support for their development.

...**Families.** Care is unaffordable and hard to find.

...**Providers.** The field is plagued by low pay, turnover, layered regulations, and an inability to make ends meet.

...**The Economic Recovery.** Businesses need parents to work.

**Challenges that existed before the pandemic have only gotten worse.**

## Charge

## Goal

# Taskforce

Develop recommendations to:

- Increase eligible families use of child care subsidies; and
- Expand access to high-quality, subsidized child care for families that are not currently eligible for subsidized child care who cannot otherwise afford or access child care.

Oregon's child care system should be universally accessible and equitable, and truly work for all families, prioritizing children and families who have been historically marginalized. It needs to provide access to developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant and inclusive child care for children and families across race, ethnicity, language, geography, disability, and income levels, as recommended by Raise Up Oregon.

# Recommendations

## Child Care Businesses

- **Conduct a thorough review of child care rules and licensing standards**
  - Align reimbursement rates with the actual cost of care, pay upfront
  - Utilize contracted slots
  - Provide an automated, centralized web portal to access the ERDC system
- **Eliminate or significantly reduce delays in the receipt of subsidy payments to child care businesses**
  - Eliminate or reduce parent copays
- **Reduce and eliminate barriers for child care businesses**
  - Have local, centralized, child care regulation experts
  - Allow/credit on-the-job training
  - Embed supports for providers
  - Streamline background checks
  - Allow short-term substitutes
- **Convene an agency-led work group: Keep business voice at the table**

# Recommendations

## Child Care Workers

- **Compensation**

- Compensation needs to be commensurate with the importance of and professionalism of the work.
- Enhanced wages will require reimbursement rates that support the true cost of service.

- **Career Pathways**

- Support for preservice and inservice programs are necessary for ongoing skill development and opportunities for career advancement
- Use of technology and recognition of on the job experience are essential to career pathing

- **Stable jobs**

- Consistent scheduling for teachers provides for a more stable income, but requires enrollment based reimbursement policies
- Professional development opportunities to ensure that teachers have the skills needed to feel successful in the classroom (e.g., dealing with challenging behaviors)

- **Retention and Recruitment**

- Intentional efforts to build a pipeline including elevating the respect for the profession

# Recommendations

## Funding

- **Consolidate Funds**
- **Protect existing state investment & fully draw down federal funds**
- **Modernize Oregon's Child Care Assistance Statute**
  - expand eligibility
  - pay providers for the true cost of care
  - make parent copays affordable
  - increase grants or contracts to child care providers

**We must spend current funding better if we want to design a strong child care assistance program that works for children, families, providers, and for Oregon.**

# Recommendations

## Governance

- **Consolidate Administration**
- **Modernize and Centralize Data**

# Short-term Recommendations

- Consolidate governance and funding
- Protect current state investment
- Update child care subsidy statute
- Maximize federal funding to Oregon
- Support the federal Child Care for Working Families Act
- Spend existing funding well
- Increase support for providers
- Provide accountability for needed changes with biennial reports



In Conclusion –

“I do child care for the poorest of the poor because I *was* that person, and I do child care because it is important. Really super poor children matter as much as anybody else’s children matter. I do this job as a labor of love. We do it because it’s our passion. Children are important.”

*Natalie Jackson, Owner and Child Care Provider, Bear Bear Daycare, and member of the Joint Task Force on Access to Quality Affordable Child Care*