



Oregon AFSCME Support for \$250 Million Investments
In Summer Learning and Child Care in HB 5042-1

March 15, 2021

Good Afternoon Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on the proposed \$250 million General Fund allocation for Summer Learning and Child Care. These are important investments that need to include thoughtful partnerships between child care, the school districts and non-profits that are awarded these funds.

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 represents the licensed in-home child care providers, also known as Registered and Certified Family Child Care, providers in Oregon. Our members provide child care throughout Oregon and no one program is the same. Many of our providers have their kids and families with them from the time they are 6 weeks old through the age of 12. Many of them also accommodate school agers and their younger siblings allowing for less stressful pick and drop off coordination for families.

The providers with school aged kids provide wrap around care - before or after school and then full day care over the school breaks at winter, spring and summer. Some are even able to provide transportation to and from schools during the school year and to camps during the summer, so that those kids have access to enrichment activities that they may otherwise miss out on. Usually, going that extra mile or 10-12 miles is a service that providers do not charge their families, because they know that many of their families are already struggling with the cost of care.

During the last 12 months, these extra miles for child care providers has come in the form of supporting their school aged kids in care with their distance learning classes. This has come at



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a real cost with needed upgrades to internet - or even getting internet into their homes. Some even hired additional staff to support the school aged kids because rarely do they have kids in the same class or school even. Additional staff is also needed to help simultaneously juggle the needs of infants', toddlers', and preschoolers' in the providers program.

Now with the slated reopening of schools with many looking at a hybrid for all model, child care providers are stuck with a range of bad options in trying to figure out how to continue to support the kids and families without taking on additional burdens. If providers choose to do the difficult task of keeping their school aged kids they will need to juggle transportation needs, keeping in line with kid to provider ratios and coordinating several different hybrid schedules. However, if providers are unable to supply care that keeps up with these demands they may have to ask parents to find care elsewhere.

All of this to say that this \$250 million general fund allocation to support kids in much needed summer learning and enrichment opportunities is great. However, without real partnership and communication with child care providers of all kinds, many of the wrap-around supports that providers supply all year round and especially over the last few months won't truly be possible.

Oregon AFSCME asks that to make these investments work we must commit to coordinating communication among school districts, nonprofits and child care providers. We must do so to ensure that child care providers can express what kind of supports are needed to ensure continuity of care. When these programs are offered without consideration for the child care settings we complicate the lives of both providers and the families that depend on them to support their work needs.

Communication between school districts, nonprofits and childcare providers could simply start with an enrollment form that asks other care settings about hours of operation and compiles provider contact information. A program could contact the provider directly to help



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coordinate communications and to help meet the needs of parents, childcare providers, and summer programs.

The communication should include:

1. Knowing the needs for transportation of any kids that would be attending both programs.
 - Understanding that a provider may need for pickup/drop off at their location because of staffing and ratios needs.
2. Knowing the need, if any, for the child care provider to provide transportation to the activity or camp.
 - A time range if doing the drop off and pick up from the camp or activity.
 - Financial supports to cover staffing or transportation costs

Another important piece along with coordinating communication is ensuring that providers are able to hold kids spots so that they are able return when their camp or enrichment program ends. However, consideration must be given to ensure that the provider is financially able to hold the child's spot open and does not face a financial burden in doing so.

This should be done in partnership with the Early Learning Division.

These investments are certainly needed to get kids back into rebuilding their social interaction muscles. We need to make sure that this works for all of the students we need to reach, and to ensure that once again parents aren't put in the position of deciding from a menu of incomplete or impossible options. We also need to make sure that the providers aren't once again put into the position making their families have to choose between those impossible options and cause the provider to suffer financially.

Oregon AFSCME Council 75 and the providers we represent through AFSCME Local 132, Child Care Providers Together, look forward to partnering with the Early Learning Division and all of the programs that would provide these much needed services to help our kids reconnect with their communities and fill the many gaps this past year has created.



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