



April 9, 2021

**RE: SB 5505 – \$250 million for affordable housing through LIFT**

Co-Chair Girod, Co-Chair Holvey, and Members of the Committee,

The [Early Childhood Coalition](#) supports SB 5505 and the inclusion of \$250 million for affordable housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds through the LIFT program. As the Coalition created our 2021 agenda, we started by hearing from culturally specific and direct service organizations working with families and providers who are Black and Indigenous, people of color, and who have historically excluded from policy and budget decisions. Support for basic needs, including food, housing, and emotional support, were elevated as critical priorities for families.

A safe and stable place to call home is a basic human need. For young children, housing is critical to early development. Before the age of 5, a child's brain makes one million new neural connections every second, with early experiences shaping brain architecture. This stage of complex neural, social, and emotional development makes early childhood a critical window in which to eliminate disparities.

Prior to the COVID pandemic, housing was already a crisis facing families across Oregon. In the 2019-20 school year, over 21,000 children experienced homelessness at some point during the year, with their families. Due to COVID and the early closure of schools, we know this is an undercount.

The LIFT program is a proven strategy to increase the number of affordable family homes across Oregon. Since 2015, over 3600 affordable homes have been built or are under construction. LIFT prioritizes larger family-size units in new developments for families of color and families in rural communities. When racial equity and communities who have been marginalized are at the center of decision-making, programs and services can mitigate disparities by race/ethnicity, income, geography, disability, language, immigrant and refugee status, homelessness, and foster care. We ask legislators to commit to continued improvement in support for all of Oregon's young children and their families and to center the voices of those most impacted by legislative actions in their decision-making processes. Solutions must be built with families, to work for them.

We urge your support for the inclusion of \$250 million for affordable housing and \$50 million for permanent supportive housing in Article XI-Q General Obligation bonds in SB 5505.

Sincerely,

Adelante Mujeres  
Alliance for Equity in Montessori Education  
Children's Institute

Family Forward Oregon  
Latino Network  
Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub  
Oregon Alliance  
Our Children Oregon  
Right From The Start at The Oregon Public Health Institute