

I am writing to request that the ways and means committee allocate funding from the state budget and American Rescue Plan Act to help save the Portland Children's Museum. I've been a preschool teacher for nearly 30 years and worked at the children's museum as a PreK teacher for 10 of those years. I've met and offered professional training and support to teachers from all over the USA, and the world. The Pedagogical leadership from the Museum Center for Children's learning propelled the museums mission forward to provoke fresh ideas in both public education and for the community (local and to children's museums across the country) to create environments that inspire playful inquiry and innovative methods for centering our youngest citizens imaginations, problem solving abilities, empathy, curiosity and more. I can't think of a more important mission and cause than investing in our future generations. Young children and parents benefitted from the educational outreach the museum provided. In Reggio Emilia shortly after the town was decimated at the end of ww2 the citizens decided that in order to ensure such a tragedy did not recur they would need to change everything beginning from how they treat and educate their youngest citizens and include their rich cultures of thinking and learning and living as a world worthy of children is best for all of us. Brick by brick the women of the town built their first preschools by hand with the sale of army tanks— what is our PCM worth? What value will we give to the citizens with the least decision making power and the most to lose?