

Co-Chairs and members of the committee, my name is Molly Day and I the Early Learning Director at United Way of the Columbia-Willamette and co-director of the early learning hub in Multnomah County. I am writing in support of the Early Childhood Coalition's agenda. It is thoughtful, practical, statewide and it is centered in racial equity. It comprehensively addresses several of the issues raised in the hearing such as wage parity at Relief Nurseries, support for the Healthy Families program and helping college students access benefits.

Last night at the hearing, we were ready to speak to this with parent leaders from our hub's Parent Accountability Council. They chose to get dinner ready and help with homework rather than wait in the queue and asked me to speak for them. But I want you to know that they are experienced policy makers themselves, having shepherded the Preschool For All initiative in our county from concept to reality over five years. And they are people who have experienced hatred and discrimination in our systems: our parent leaders are Black, Somali, Native American, Slavic, Latina, and Vietnamese.

We want to say to you that this is a moment in our nation and our state to lean in and maximize investment in our small children. They won't wait. These pandemic years are their formative years when their brains are laying down neural pathways that will affect them their whole lives. And there are smart investments you can make this term that will benefit Democrats and Republicans across the state, in small towns, frontier areas, farms and cities—we all have children.

We're asking you to fully fund the Early Childhood Coalition agenda--priorities carefully put together by people who value the same things you do--Oregon's present and our future.

Thank you for hearing us. The Early Childhood Coalition agenda can be found at <https://childinst.org/ecc-2021-legislative-agenda/>