



[earlylearninghub.org](http://earlylearninghub.org)

April 24, 2021

Good afternoon Co-Chairs Johnson, Steiner Hayward, and Rayfield and esteemed committee members. My name is Lisa Harnisch, and I am the Executive Director Marion & Polk Early Learning Hub.

I want to speak to one element of the early learning system budget regarding the funding of Early Learning Hubs. I am asking to restore early learning hubs in the 2021-23 budget to at a minimum the current service level.

As Hubs we have the exciting role of convening, collaborating, and catalyzing action in our regions with the ultimate goal of impacting kindergarten readiness. We do this in a variety of ways in our areas, thus the actual work may look different depending on the local context, needs, and partnerships. We forge relationships with partners to better align services and meet the needs of families, with an emphasis on those that are historically underserved. We are also a resource for families by assisting them in finding the best publicly funded program to meet their family needs, such as Preschool Promise, Oregon Prekindergarten, Head Start as well as parent education opportunities. In addition, we work to bring the parent voice to the forefront of system level changes.

Oregon's early learning hubs are innovative, powerful pieces of the early childhood system. To continue the work especially during this tender time of the pandemic recovery, we're asking you to return us to at least CSL, which is 22.4 million. With the important work of Raise Up Oregon, the statewide early learning system plan, we cannot afford to undercut the infrastructure needed to make this all work.

The reduction to the early learning Hubs called for in the 2021-2023 will result in difficult decisions, which could include staffing, about how we can support the work in our respective regions. This will have a result of reducing in our ability to fund partners to provide kindergarten readiness activities, and in turn fewer children will be able to participate in these activities across Oregon.

I urge your support for full funding of our early childhood system, including the early learning hub funding. Together we can keep Oregon moving forward into its potential as the best place in the country to raise a child. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lisa Harnisch  
Executive Director