



Oregon Early Learning Council

700 Summer Street NE, Suite 350

Salem, OR 97301

April 28, 2021

Chair House Democratic Leader Barbara Smith Warner

House Committee on Rules

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

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*Chair, Early Learning
Council*

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*Deputy Director,
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ALYSSA CHATTERJEE
*Acting Early Learning
System Director*

Dear Chair Smith Warner,

I write on behalf of the Early Learning Council in support of House Bill 3073. The creation of an independent agency to support early learning and care is of utmost importance to the Council. Creating an independent agency whose sole focus is early care and education is an essential step toward achieving the three goals of the early learning system in our strategic plan, *Raise Up Oregon*: 1) children arrive at school ready for kindergarten; 2) children are raised in healthy, stable and attached families; and 3) the early learning system is equitable, aligned, coordinated and family-centered.

The proposed new agency builds on current collaboration and alignment activities occurring across multiple state agencies. While we have accomplished a great deal through alignment and collaboration, child care and preschool programming continues to be scattered across multiple agencies, creating critical gaps, silos and disconnects for families, providers, and communities. By bringing child care and preschool together in one independent agency, we have a unique opportunity to address these early care and education gaps through a unified approach. At the same time, the agency will be well positioned to successfully partner with other state agencies to address the comprehensive needs of children and families in health, education, housing, food and nutrition, and child welfare.

With significant federal relief funds coming to Oregon, including new investments for child care, we are well positioned to continue to innovate and will benefit greatly from the proposed new agency. This will help us ensure that we have strong systems and services in place that can assure equity, access, and quality. Early care and education is necessary to realize our educational goals, but it is equally necessary to realize our economic development goals—the new agency will be well positioned to ensure that we have an effective approach that can do both.

You have our strong endorsement for the proposed agency and the Early Learning Council is prepared to assist in any way that we can to assure success.

Sincerely,

Sue Miller, Chair
Early Learning Council