

February 15th, 2021

To: The House Early Childhood Committee

From: Lauren Johns

Re: Support of HB 2503 and HB 3073

Dear Chair Karin Power and Vice-Chairs Lisa Renyolds & Jack Zika,

My name is Ren Johns and I live in Portland. I'm writing to support as strongly as I possibly can the expansion of ERDC and the streamlining of the current procedures for both families and providers. I help families in the Portland Metro area find providers and just yesterday was helping a single mom with twin kindergarteners to figure out how to get distance learning support while she's at work. She doesn't qualify for ERDC, but her budget is just too low for the market rate, so her current plan is to pay \$300/month more than she can afford and just hope that she gets a tax refund that will help her dig out of the hole. Another family who was just above the threshold for qualifying described the process of trying to get benefits as a "nightmare", while a provider told me she just stopped taking it and created her own scholarship fund because it would take so long for ERDC funding to arrive that she just couldn't count on it for her cashflow.

We all know that the real issue is the lack of child care funding from the federal level to create the infrastructure working families need. But while we're waiting (and fighting!) for that, it's so critical that ERDC be sustained and expanded to support working families who are drowning trying to manage all the elements of parenting during a pandemic. Thank you for your leadership in making that a reality this biennium!

Sincerely,  
Lauren Johns