



**Testimony of Oregon Community Foundation on HB 3073  
February 22, 2021**

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Chair Power and Members of the House Committee on Early Childhood:

Oregon Community Foundation urges you to support HB 3073.

As a community foundation, we can engage in direct advocacy on legislation, and we consider that to be an important tool. But we use it sparingly – on issues that are aligned with our priorities, and when the stakes are high.

This is one of those issues. Our experiences as a long-time funder of early childhood programs have taught us over and over how important it is to have a strong, fully aligned and comprehensive state early childhood system. Our philanthropic investments only go so far in a fragmented system. Oregon has made enormous progress in early childhood system-building in the last several years and our state is considered to be a national leader in several areas of program and strategy. Creation of a free-standing early childhood care and learning agency that includes our state child care subsidy program would take our evolution to another level and – in consolidating accountability, expertise and policy leadership in one place – help insure we move forward with a strong governance foundation. If early childhood development is a high priority for our state we need to signal that through creation of a cabinet-level home for all of those programs.

Early childhood has been a focus for Oregon Community Foundation for more than 25 years. Together with partners and donors we have invested millions of dollars in care and learning programs for young children and their families around the state. Our specific early childhood investment emphases have included expansion of access to parenting education programs for parents of young children and development of the statewide network of parenting education hubs; expansion of the Reach Out and Read early literacy program; support for the early childhood workforce through scholarship programs and culturally-responsive training strategies; support for efforts to improve children's dental health; and a brand-new statewide initiative to pilot child care shared services alliances.

We are happy to be a resource to you on any of these programmatic areas, and a thought partner as you consider this legislation and others intended to improve our early care and learning programs and overall system.