



LatinoNetwork

**Testimony of Anthony Castaneda, Policy Manager,
Regarding SB 236: Childhood Expulsions and Suspensions
Senate Committee on Education
February 23th, 2021**

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Thomsen, and members of the committee,

Latino Network joins the Early Childhood Equity Collaborative and the Early Childhood Coalition to voice our support for SB 236 with the proposed amendment to cultivate the conditions for all children to learn and thrive in early childhood.

Latino Network is a culturally specific nonprofit serving children, youth, and families in Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties. Every year our organization provides transformative services to thousands of Latinos in the areas of education and mentorship, leadership development, and family stability.

A child's brain goes through an incredible period of development in the earliest years of life. From birth to 5, new experiences and memories make [millions of neural connections in the developing brain every second](#). Unnurturing environments or disruptions in education can cause harm during this critical phase in a child's development. Yet, Black children, Indigenous children, and children with developmental disabilities experience the highest suspension and expulsion rates of any age. Inclusion and belonging in all early learning opportunities moves us closer to closing existing disparities in early childhood stemming from family wealth and capital.

SB 236 provides a path forward to ensure that families, educators, and providers have the resources to foster the conditions for all children to thrive early in life. SB 236 directs the Department of Education to conduct a study on exclusion, suspension, and expulsion of children. A review of the practices, policies, and guidelines will reveal insights into the impact on children and families and strategies for meeting children needs. SB 236 also challenges this cycle by providing support for early care educators to better serve all children in their programs. Part of the solution is ensuring that educators and providers have the training and resources to mitigate challenges as they arise. **We support a system that is responsive to the emotional and developmental needs of all children.**

We urge the passage of SB 236. Thank you for your time and leadership.