



## Supporting Oregon's most vulnerable youth.

As we continue to live with the COVID-19 pandemic and begin to look toward recovery, the need for safe spaces for children to learn and play has become even more apparent. As parents begin to return to work or seek employment following COVID-related job losses, youth need safe, engaging spaces to support hands-on learning opportunities and social enrichment that so many of Oregon's most vulnerable youth have missed due to school closures.

Before, during and after the pandemic, youth serving organizations like YMCAs and Boys & Girls Clubs have provided and will continue to provide:

- Emergency childcare and youth services programming
- Social-emotional and mental health support
- Academic mentoring and distance learning support
- Device and connectivity support
- Basic needs support including meals and food services and delivery services.

It is vital that we remain focused on supporting equitable access, training, and the development of high-quality programming to not only meet the immediate needs of the youth and families we serve, but also to ensure Oregon can move toward recovery.

**We support the building of better childcare delivery systems that are more inclusive.** We also know that there is a lot of coordination and planning work that needs to take place between all types of programs to strengthen the field, but the planning work needs to precede structural changes. We would like to be included in this planning work.

**We support the alignment of K-12 standards with out-of-school time learning and childcare.** As youth serving organizations continue to work to meet the immediate needs of the families they serve, it is imperative that the points of alignment between K-12 and early learning, childcare and out-of-school time programs is reevaluated. Nearly 86% of out-of-school time sites are co-located at Oregon schools and many schools provide the structure for Preschool Promise, Head Start and support programs for children with disabilities. However, we are concerned that separating these programs at this fragile time may have unintended consequences without the appropriate coordination and planning.

**Afterschool program providers must undergo regulatory processes, with the accompanying time and expense, in school-based locations.** After-school providers operating on an active school site are not responsible for the school site to meet health and safety regulations. That duty falls on the school. If the school site is safe before 3:00 pm, it's safe at 3:05 for an after-school program working with the same children.

### **We propose the following amendment to HB 3073:**

*In consultation with the Department of Education, the Early Learning Division and the Office of Child Care shall revise and adopt rules and standards of operation for childcare for school age youth ages 5 – 11 administered by the department. At a minimum, the Early Learning Division and the Office of Child Care shall (a) convene a School-Age Task Force to advise in the creation of rules and standards of operation for childcare for school age youth ages 5-11; (b) recognize existing standards met by nationally-chartered nonprofit youth development agencies providing facility-based afterschool services for school-age children as relevant and age-appropriate standards; and (c) recognize existing health and safety standards for Oregon public schools shall be deemed sufficient for school-based afterschool programs and facility-based sites serving school-age children.*