



VOICES UNITED.
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

February 2, 2022

House Committee on Early Childhood
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Support for HB 4005 and \$100 million child care investment package

Dear Chair Power, Vice-Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chair Zika, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is advancing equitable policymaking and whole-child advocacy statewide to ensure our children and youth have what they need, regardless of their race or where they live, to thrive by activating meaningful change for children and families. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First for Oregon. We collect, analyze, and elevate data and research that, alongside lived experience, drives conversations in support of Oregon's future. We partner alongside ~120 organizations through The Children's Agenda to uplift and advocate for community-driven, equity-centered policies and investments that will improve the lives of Oregon's children and families.

HB 4005 and related investments in childcare are a priority of the [2022 Children's Agenda](#) and are supported by many of our partners. We urge the legislature to make progress on child care in the 2022 Legislative Session, because we know that access to child care is necessary for joyful children, thriving families, and a strong economy. Raising economic standards for care providers and ensuring safe, quality childcare are integral to bolstering equity and reducing harm in Oregon communities.

As outlined in OCO's latest issue brief "Oregon's Child Care Conundrum", the child care landscape in Oregon is complex, underfunded, and marked by ongoing struggles for caregivers, providers, and children alike.¹ Sufficient income, stable housing, and quality child care resources are protective factors for whole-child wellbeing and maltreatment prevention, especially for children in the earliest stages of life². Despite the prohibitive costs of child care, these care workers (who are disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and women of color) remain among the lowest paid in Oregon. Average annual wages in child care are about half the all-

¹ https://ourchildrenoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/ChildCare_IssueBrief_Summary/FINAL.pdf?sourceid=1047127&emci=ea7b1b65-ba6d-ec11-94f6-c896650d923c&emdi=b40f174b-166f-ec11-94f6-c896650d923c&ceid=4804256

² <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/riskprotectivefactors.html>

The Children's Agenda

is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.



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industry Oregon average.³The COVID-19 pandemic has only further exacerbated these difficulties and worsened disparities across racial/ethnic and income lines, making clear that supporting care work is necessary for an equitable recovery. HB 4005 and its related investments will create equitable access to basic resources across the state, resulting in protected children, supported families, and a stabilized workforce.

31% of Oregon's workforce is composed of parents⁴. Without care work, no other work can happen. To address these inadequacies, HB 4005 will:

- Support providers and child care affordability for subsidy-eligible families by increasing subsidy rates to the 90th percentile of the 2020 child care market rate.
- Support Oregon's child care systems development through HB 3073 Implementation with increased capacity to stand up the new Department of Early Learning and Care.
- Delay fire code requirements on in-home child care providers to prioritize building new provider capacity while still keeping kids safe.

Additionally, we support increasing child care slots through investing in new provider grants, strengthening our state's Child Care Resource & Referral Centers, and direct relief payments to the child care workforce. Without investing in new providers and helping existing providers expand, we cannot take the necessary steps to an equitable post-pandemic recovery.

We believe that all children and families deserve to have the tools they need to thrive. HB 4005 will ensure access to high quality, affordable, and culturally relevant child care, and that every child care provider will be paid a wage that reflects the essential work they do.

We urge you to support HB 4005 and the child care investment package. Thank you for your consideration.

From the Our Children Oregon Team,

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Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

Marris Alden, Social Work Intern

View the 2022 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2022-childrens-agenda

³ <https://familyforwardoregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/FFO-Child-Care-Report-2019-REV.pdf>

⁴ [https://www.qualityinfo.org/~for-oregon-parents-working-is-the-norm#:~:text=How%20much%20of%20the%20workforce,to%20the%20nation%20\(33%25\)](https://www.qualityinfo.org/~for-oregon-parents-working-is-the-norm#:~:text=How%20much%20of%20the%20workforce,to%20the%20nation%20(33%25))