



The Oregon Head Start Association Supports HB 3435

Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) is a state funded program that operates under the same guidelines as federal Head Start programs. Head Start provides free preschool for children ages 3-4. Programs support critical language, literacy, and emotional development, and are located in every county in Oregon. Head Start provides nutrition support, health care support, and prioritizes working with families to help them stay engaged and involved in their child's education.

Head Start's OPK programs provide children with a chance to begin public kindergarten well-adjusted and ready to learn. Children eligible for Oregon Pre-Kindergarten come from families that earn less than 100 percent of federal poverty level, are currently homeless, in foster care or from families receiving TANF or SSI benefits. Approximately 17,500 children are enrolled in federal or state Oregon Pre-Kindergarten programs.

The Oregon Head Start Association supports HB 3435 and two key changes the bill makes to better support Head Start programs.

- The Early Learning Division is required to renew contracts for the Oregon Pre-Kindergarten (OPK) program annually. This bill would allow the ELD to create two-year contracts which would reduce the work for programs and give them the security of knowing what their funding would be for a longer period of time. This helps local Head Start programs plan better in advance.
- The reason for the name change is to better align with what is happening at the federal level. Federal Head Start is moving to a prenatal to kindergarten program. This bill would make Oregon Head Start a prenatal to kindergarten program, keeping Oregon's Head Start program consistent with the federal model.

The Oregon Head Start Association asks for your support of HB 3435.