



Child Care That Works. For Every Family.

To: House Committee on Early Childhood & Human Services

From: Child Care for Oregon

Date: March 20, 2023

RE: In Support of HB 3027 with -2 Amendment

Chair Reynolds, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, members of the committee:

On behalf of the Child Care for Oregon Coalition, a coalition of nonprofit organizations, labor unions, community advocates, parents, caregivers and providers working to build a comprehensive early learning and child care system in Oregon, we strongly urge your support of House Bill 3027 and the -2 amendment.

Our entire economy is dependent on equitable access to child care. Like roads and bridges, affordable, high-quality child care is necessary infrastructure. Parents need affordable child care that provides peace of mind that their children are learning and loved. Employers need their employees to have access to reliable, affordable child care so they can return to work. And our future workforce demands must ensure that all children have access to child care environments that stimulate development and get kids ready to learn in K-12.

However, far too many Oregon families that qualify for child care subsidies are unable to access it. Awareness of programs, confusing applications, slow eligibility determination processes and bureaucratic practices create barriers for Oregon families, especially our BIPOC families. Lack of access to these critical child care affordability programs leads to massive economic inequality and the long-term negative impacts for children. Access to child care is critical for women's workforce participation, family economic security, and child development.

While our state has made significant strides in passing HB 3073 (2021), we still have much work to do. In order to fulfill the vision of HB 3073 (2021) which created DELC and brought all child care and early learning programs into one agency, we need to tackle the disjointed access, applications, and eligibility processes for these programs. While Employment Related Day Care and Baby Promise are currently accessible through the ONE Eligibility System, other programs such as Preschool Promise, Head Start or OPK are accessed through Early Learning

Hubs and local programs. HB 3027-2 will put together a workgroup to report back to the legislature with a plan to create a “one-door” experience for families needing to access child care in Oregon. Current practices require families to become experts on the different eligibility criteria and application processes for each program. Then they apply to different places for each program and wade through bureaucratic notice for more information. The result is that families are not utilizing the child care affordability programs Oregon is offering. Something needs to change.

HB 3027-2 is the first step to creating a simpler process for families. In coordination with DELC, CCRRs, and HUBS, community-based child care navigators could reach out to eligible families, assist with applications, process eligibility, and connect families with providers. This “one door” experience is the vision lawmakers had when creating the new agency DELC. Now it is time we implement this vision.

HB 3027-2 is a necessary step to working out the enrollment and eligibility barriers that have so long plagued Oregon’s early learning and child care programs. Filling these programs and serving as many children as possible is necessary for the health of our community and the economy of Oregon.



Urban League of Portland