



April 25, 2023

Oregon Legislature
Way & Means Committee

Re: Support of Capitol Fund Request for Jefferson County-COCC Early Childhood Education and Health Careers Center

Dear Co-Chair Steiner, Co-Chair Sanchez and honorable committee members;

My name is Teresa Martin, Executive Director from The Children's Learning Center (TCLC), in Madras, Oregon. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today regarding our Capitol Fund Request for Jefferson County. We are requesting support from this committee for \$5 Million for a capitol construction project for Jefferson County and Central Oregon Community College (COCC). This project will allow me to expand early childhood services in Jefferson County.

Since Jefferson County is a childcare desert, we are working with other local entities to find creative ways to expand those services. One way to do this is in partnership with COCC who will help provide TCLC space for about 5 classrooms with a potential to serve over 90 students ages 0-5. We will also be partnering with COCC for practicum, observation, and possible work opportunities for students along with expansion of the early childhood workforce.

Much of our funding is provided by the Early Learning Division OPK program (soon to be DELC) as a State Funded only program. We also integrate self-pay services for childcare for children ages 0-5. This opportunity to partner with COCC will allow us to expand our service options and contribute to the economic growth of Jefferson County.

The expansion of this program at its full capacity could bring another 20-30 jobs through our company alone not touching on the expansion of workforce through some major employers who have trouble hiring staff due to the lack of childcare availability.

We are very excited for this opportunity and as a community member that grew up in Madras, I know how important these collaborations and types of services are needed and essential to our small community.

Sincerely,

Teresa Martin