

Submitter: Dana Hepper  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Education  
Measure: HB3561

The Children's Institute is excited to support the expansion of the early childhood scholarship program at the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, as proposed in HB 3561. Oregon is facing a behavioral health crisis for children. Simultaneously, Oregon is moving forward with interventions to support the social-emotional well-being of children.

Specifically, Oregon has committed to preventing and eliminating suspension and expulsion in child care and preschool programs. One key strategy is early childhood mental health consultation. Oregon has also developed a social-emotional metric for Coordinated Care Organizations. The next step on this metric is to develop strategies to increase access to early childhood behavioral health strategies.

For both of these steps to be successful, Oregon will need a workforce of diverse, skilled professionals to actually implement the strategies identified. Access to higher education is a huge barrier to developing this workforce. HB 3561, combined with the \$5.2 million requested by HECC, are critical next steps to improve the well-being of children in Oregon.

Please vote yes on HB 3561 and advocate for the funding needed to implement.