



February 6th, 2024

To: House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business
FROM: Our Children Oregon, The Children's Agenda
RE: Support of HB 4098-1, CHIPS and Child Care

Dear Chair Bynum, Vice-Chairs Diehl and Nguyen, 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—regardless of their race, identity, ability, or where they live—have what they need to thrive. We collect, analyze, and elevate data and research that, alongside lived experience, drives conversations in support of Oregon's future. We strongly support HB 4098-1 to address a child care need for CHIPS construction and facilities workers.

Working parents and caregivers—particularly mothers—require the flexibility that child care provides to work, live, and parent sustainably. Yet, our child care system continues to be marked by ever-increasing demand, rising costs, and disproportionate and pervasive racial and regional disparities in both access and affordability. With the arrival of CHIPS facilities and the influx of workers in Oregon, the need for child care services will become even more critical.

HB 4098-1 meets the federal CHIPS grant requirements and the needs of CHIPS employers and workers by leveraging existing child care assistance programs and supply-building grant initiatives. Specifically, HB 4098-1 will:

- Establish a CHIPS Child Care Fund, directing funds to support registered, certified, and small child care centers located in areas where semiconductor or advanced manufacturing facilities are present or planned.
- Create a child care assistance program for CHIPS employers and employees, increasing the availability of child care services for this workforce.
- Address child care requirements for federal CHIPS applicants, enabling Oregon to excel in winning CHIPS grants.

HB 4098-1 is a "win-win" for both Oregon's semiconductor businesses and their workforce. Without the need to build their own child care centers or operate a worker subsidy program, CHIPS applicants can point to the investments and infrastructure in this bill to meet federal application requirements. Furthermore, this bill is especially a "win" for Oregon's construction workforce and their families.

\$1,560 in Oregon is the average monthly child care tuition, identified by the Center for American Progress’s “Cost of Child Care” calculator.¹ Lack of affordable child care poses a significant obstacle to employment, especially for mothers. 42% of mothers express their willingness to increase their earnings and explore new job opportunities if they had improved access to child care services.² Additionally, more than half of Black mothers and 48% of Latinx mothers have stated they would seek higher-paying employment when better child care access is available.³ These facts underscore the crucial need of child care to achieve equitable economic and workforce development.

By further investing in child care, we can ensure the healthy development and prosperity of all of our children. We thank you for your time and efforts to improve child well-being across the state. We urge your support of HB 4098-1.

Sincerely,

Greer Klepacki, Policy and Advocacy Sr. Coordinator
Jenifer Wagley, Executive Director

¹ <https://costofchildcare.org/index.html>

² <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>

³ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>