

Submitter: Marchel Marcos
On Behalf Of: Family Forward Oregon
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2452

To: House Committee Early Childhood and Human Services
From: Family Forward Oregon
Date: February 20, 2025
RE: In Support of HB 2452

Chair Hartman, Vice-Chairs Nguyen and Scharf, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Marchel Marcos, and I am the Political Director for Family Forward. I am excited to share Family Forward's support for HB 2452, which will strengthen the capacity of Child Care Resource & Referral agencies across the state to better serve all Oregon families.

As we all know, accessing child care is a significant challenge for many families in Oregon. Finding a provider with an opening and affording care that can cost more than tuition at a state higher education institution are just two of the hurdles families face. With nearly every county in Oregon being a child care desert, it's clear that we need to make every open slot count.

The numbers are stark: out of 16,000 families with Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) vouchers, over 4,000 are still unable to find a childcare provider. This is unacceptable and has long-term consequences for these families and our state's economic growth.

HB 2452 takes a crucial step towards addressing the child care crisis by empowering Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CCR&Rs) to serve as trusted community hubs for families and providers alike. By directing the Department of Early Learning and Care to establish a grant program, HB 2452 enables CCR&Rs to provide personalized support to parents in determining their child care needs, thoroughly vetting providers, and connecting them with qualified caregivers that meet their unique requirements.

This approach not only strengthens our childcare system but also acknowledges the critical role CCR&Rs play in bridging the gap between families and providers. By investing in these community-based agencies, we can create a more responsive, effective, and equitable childcare landscape that benefits all Oregonians.

The current system is not meeting the needs of too many families who rely on ERDC

subsidies to access quality care for their children. While 2-1-1 or FindChildCareOregon.org provide an initial touchpoint for families, they lack the personal touch and local expertise that CCR&R agencies offer. This is particularly important for families searching for specialized care for children with disabilities or those needing access to weekend or night care. Additionally, CCR&Rs are often better equipped to support rural families where care options are fewer and more sparse.

By creating an enhanced referral system with CCR&R agencies, HB 2452 can provide more community-based assistance for families and providers, strengthening our overall child care referral system statewide. Prior to 2016, child care referrals were provided through regional CCR&R organizations across the state. By reviving this successful model, we can ensure that families receive the support they need to find suitable care, while also empowering providers to expand their services and meet the growing demands of our communities.

I urge you to pass House Bill 2452 and take a crucial step towards rebuilding a more inclusive and supportive childcare system that works for all Oregonians.

Marchel Marcos
Political Director
Family Forward Oregon