

To: Senate Early Childhood & Behavioral Health Committee
From: Dana Hepper, Children's Institute
Date: Tuesday, February 25, 2025
Re: SB 694 - Oregon Kids Credit

Chair Reynolds, Vice Chair Anderson, and members of the Committee,

My name is Dana Hepper, and I am the Director of Policy & Advocacy at the Children's Institute. Our vision is to make Oregon the best place to be a kid.

We strongly support SB 694 to enhance the Oregon Kids Credit.

Early experiences, good and bad, have a profound and lasting impact on brain development. Strengthening economic support to families is a strategy [recommended by the CDC](#) to prevent Adverse Childhood Experiences, thereby supporting child development.

This means expanding the Oregon Kids Credit, which is focused on 0-5 year olds, literally has the power to shape developing brains. Overwhelming research shows that poverty is highly (and obviously) correlated with material hardship, "including inadequate shelter and medical care, food insecurity, and a lack of other essentials" ([NIH](#), 2018). These experiences during early childhood inhibit development.

The Oregon Kids Credit increases resources available to families, eases family financial stress, thereby increasing family well-being and reducing harm to children.

If we believe all the research and people's stories that early childhood experiences are foundational, we must choose children across policy areas - not just in education or health, but also in our tax code and economic policy.

This is the right thing to do and it's economically sound.

Expanding the Oregon Kids Credit is an effective and efficient way to deliver resources to families struggling to make ends meet. **Please support Oregon families, and their young children, by advancing SB 694.**