

Submitter: Aimee Tenbrook  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee  
On Education  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5514

The Oregon Head Start Association is working to ensure that every eligible family is provided with an opportunity to enroll their child in a local Head Start program.

Our top priority is to stabilize funding for local head start programs. We are asking for \$387.843 million funding from the existing funding sources that support our programs, the General Fund and funding from the Student Success Act. This funding level would allow us to maintain existing services, and operate without significant budget cuts.

Head Start programs, established nearly 60 years ago by President Lyndon B. Johnson, have a long history and track record of success. With uncertainty at the federal level, state support for Head Start has never been so critical.

OPK is a state funded program that operates under the same guidelines as federal Head Start Programs. Head Start provides high quality, free pre-school for children ages 3-4.

Programs support critical language, literacy, and emotional development, and are located in every county in Oregon.

Head Start provides nutrition support, health care support, and prioritizes working with families to help them stay engaged and involved in their child's education. Head Start's OPK programs provide children with a chance to begin public kindergarten well-adjusted and ready to learn.

Eligible children primarily come from families that earn less than 100 percent of federal poverty level, are currently homeless, in foster care or from families receiving TANF, SSI or SNAP benefits. Early Head Start provides early learning and comprehensive child development along with family support services to low-income families with children from birth to 3 years of age.

Head Start puts children on the pathway to success.

Children are more likely to read by the 3rd grade, graduate from high school and receive a post-secondary degree. Head Start programs prioritize children's health. Programs promote physical, dental, and mental health. They provide free daily meals and snacks to promote good nutrition and ensure children are healthy and ready to

learn.

A key to Head Start programs success is that Head Start emphasizes the role of parents as their child's first and most important teacher. Parents learn how best to support their child's educational development and are given opportunities to advance their own education and gain job training.