



March 4, 2025

**RE: Department of Early Learning & Care Budget (SB 5514)**

Dear Chairs Sollman and Ruiz and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to request your support of SB 5514. Early experiences have a deep impact on lifelong health and wellbeing. Experiencing four or more adverse childhood experiences early in life is strongly linked to long-term challenges, such as low performance in school and the workforce as well as many chronic and costly health conditions. Every program in the DELC budget directly impacts children and their families. If we want a healthy Oregon, we need to invest as far upstream as possible to support healthy families and children so they arrive at school ready to succeed.

I would like to call out the importance of Employment Related Day Care. There are now nearly 10,000 families on the waitlist for this program. Many of those families live in poverty because they simply cannot afford to pay for childcare. We are grateful for the significant investments the legislature has made to increase the capacity of the child care sector, but we also need to ensure that families can afford this care so that they are able to support their families.

As the Early Learning Director for Yamhill County, I would also like to request your continued support of Early Learning Hubs. These locally based teams work to convene cross-sector partners to address gaps and barriers in service to maximize efficiencies and improve services to children. Their unique role within their communities allows them to build capacity at the local level, making state investments go further. They are also uniquely positioned to be conduits of resources and information, both to providers and to the families that need them. Adequately resourcing Hubs ensures that the early childhood system will not be siloed and that families will have the support they need to find and access available resources.

Please support current service level funding for all DELC programs. The time to invest in our families and our future is now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jennifer E. Laine".

Jennifer E. Laine  
Early Learning Director  
Yamhill CCO