

March 4, 2025

TO: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education
FROM: Ali King, on behalf of Our Children Oregon's 2025 Children's Agenda
SUBJECT: Support for SB 5514

Chairs Sollman and Ruiz and Members of the Committee,

My name is Ali King and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for Our Children Oregon (OCO), a statewide organization that champions equitable policies and opportunities for every child by leveraging data and research. The Children's Agenda, convened annually by OCO, brings together more than 135 organizations statewide to create a holistic legislative agenda dedicated to improving the wellbeing of Oregon's children, youth, and families.

I am reaching out today in support of several requests in the DELC budget—**ERDC funding, Investing in Relief Nurseries, and Child Care Workforce Package (HB 3008)**—which are all **prioritized in the 2025 Children's Agenda and have strong and broad support from our partner organizations across Oregon.**

Throughout my career, I have seen firsthand how early childhood investments have immediate and long-term economic benefits for individual communities and the state. By providing funding to DELC to support these bills, we can work toward a much-needed transformation of Oregon's child care system.

The **Employment Related Day Care program** is a lifeline for thousands of families across Oregon, but cuts to ERDC have left more than 9,000 families on a waitlist and destabilized the child care market. The program is currently only serving about 12% of eligible families. Allocating \$500 million of additional budget to DELC for this program would pay for the 4,000 families approved for ERDC who have not yet been connected to a child care provider and would eliminate the huge waitlist.

Oregon's Relief Nurseries provide children, birth through age five, and their families with wraparound support to keep young children safe, strengthen families, prevent abuse and neglect, and reduce costly foster care. A budget of \$4.9 million above the GRB for Relief Nurseries would sustain services for over 2,300 children and families and reach up to 300 more children with vital therapeutic classroom and home visiting services.

Child care is the workforce behind the workforce. Parents can't work or go to school if their children don't have access to quality, affordable child care. Despite their essential role, early learning and child care providers shoulder the burden of an insufficient child care assistance system. **HB 3008** will support and expand the state's current and future child care workforce.

We appreciate the work you do to support Oregon's families and children. As I'm sure you know, investing in early childhood is the first step in crisis prevention. Our public systems must create policies and programs that reduce barriers and ensure children and families are supported and set up to succeed.

We urge you to fund ERDC, Child Care Workforce Package, and Investing in Relief Nurseries to help build a more equitable, accessible, and sustainable child care system in Oregon, which will impact our workforce and economy and ensure Oregon's young children and families have what they need to thrive.

Sincerely,

Ali King, on behalf of Our Children Oregon's 2025 Children's Agenda Coalition

View the [2025 Children's Agenda](#)