



NORTHWEST

March 6, 2025

To: Co-chair Senator Janeen Sollman and Co-Chair Representative Ricki Ruiz and members of the Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Education

Re: SB 5514 -- Financial administration of the Department of Early Learning and Care

For the record, my name is Shannon Blood, and I am submitting testimony today on behalf of Reach Out and Read in support of the Department of Early Learning and Care’s budget request. Early childhood investments have immediate and long-term economic benefits for individual communities and the state. 76% of Oregonians believe in the power and importance of public investment in early childhood education and development programs (OVBC, 2024).

Our youngest children and families need a coordinated, robust, and sustainable early childhood system. However, if early childhood supports and services are funded in a piecemeal manner, they remain on shaky ground. The continued success of these programs relies on the strength of the whole system. We must build a solid foundation and invest in all areas of early childhood, including early literacy.

As an early literacy and relational health program, Reach Out and Read champions and promotes the positive effects of engaging in daily reading and other language-rich activities with young children and their parents. We do this work in partnership with medical clinicians during well-child visits, starting in infancy and going through age five.

Reach Out and Read is one part of Oregon’s continuum of early literacy services. The variety of programs engaged in helping to build home libraries and encouraging a love of reading helps ensure families have entry points in places and ways that work best for their needs and interest. Each plays a unique role in Oregon’s system of early literacy services and supports.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to include the \$25 million for early literacy as described in POP 580 so that the Department of Early Learning and Care’s [Birth Through Five Literacy Plan](#) can be fully realized. This plan has three main goals:

- to increase access to culturally specific early literacy programs for children from birth to age five,
- provide training and coaching for direct service staff in early literacy, and
- to develop and expand language revitalization efforts by federally recognized Indian Tribes in Oregon.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely,

Shannon M. Blood

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