



Oregon Early Learning Council

700 Summer Street NE, Suite 350

Salem, OR 97301

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Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education

900 Court St. NE

Salem, OR 97301

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*Chair, Early Learning
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*Early Learning
System Director*

Dear Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Ruiz and Committee members,

The Early Learning Council offers its strong support for SB 5514 which appropriates funds to the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) for the biennium beginning July 1, 2025. This bill is crucial to continue supporting Oregon's youngest children and their families, particularly as Oregon seeks to address literacy development across the state.

The bill provides comprehensive funding and ensures that DELIC receives financial resources necessary to support operational needs and their administered programs. Investing in early childhood education programs yields significant long-term benefits for children's well-being. The early years of a child's life, the time between birth and kindergarten entry, represent the most consequential period in human development. Participation in early care and education programs positively impacts employment and income levels and reduces the likelihood of contact with the criminal justice system later in life. This investment will also reduce many of the challenges facing the K-12 system when children arrive unprepared and are dealing with behavioral health issues. Multi-agency strategies for addressing these issues are outlined in the Council's *Raise Up Oregon: A Statewide Early Childhood System Plan*.

The Early Learning Council is committed to supporting DELIC and its mission and vision that all children, families, early care and education professionals, and communities are supported and empowered to thrive. Accessible and affordable child care is essential for Oregon's workforce and enables parents and caregivers to participate in the economy while ensuring their children receive quality early learning experiences. Investing in childcare strengthens and supports a thriving, stable workforce across Oregon. We urge the committee to pass SB 5514 and continue to invest in initiatives that prioritize the care, education and well-being of Oregon's young children and their families.

Sincerely,

Sue Miller
Chair, Early Learning Council