



Child Care That Works. For Every Family.

Co-Chair Sollman, Co-Chair Ruiz and members of the the Committee,

On behalf of the Child Care for Oregon Coalition, a coalition of nonprofit organizations, labor unions, community advocates, parents, caregivers, and providers working to build a comprehensive early learning and child care system in Oregon, we strongly urge your support for the additional \$500M for the Employee Related Day Care (ERDC) program.

The ERDC program is a critical lifeline for more than 16,000 families across Oregon. It allows parents to remain in the workforce or continue their education while ensuring children receive the quality care they need to thrive. However, despite its importance, ERDC currently serves only about 12% of eligible families, leaving thousands without access to the child care support they need.

The Oregon Legislature has demonstrated a commitment to expanding access to affordable child care by broadening ERDC eligibility. However, without adequate funding in subsequent legislative sessions, this expansion has fallen short—resulting in a waitlist of over 9,700 families. Without additional investment, thousands of eligible families will continue to be denied access to these essential subsidies.

A well-funded ERDC program is not only critical for families but also for the stability of Oregon's entire child care system. ERDC is the largest single purchaser of child care in the state, accounting for approximately 30% of the child care market. Insufficient funding threatens both ERDC and private-pay families by exacerbating the already fragile child care infrastructure. Without robust investment, Oregon risks losing more of its limited child care capacity



Child Care That Works. For Every Family.

and undermining the progress made through recent legislative investments of over \$150 million to grow the child care workforce.

For too long, Oregon—like much of the nation—has underfunded child care. The U.S. ranks 35th out of 37 developed nations in public investment in early childhood education and care relative to GDP. Child care is the workforce behind the workforce, and just like schools and libraries, it is an essential public service that requires sustained funding.

We urge the Oregon Legislature to prioritize child care by fully funding ERDC. Investing in child care is an investment in Oregon’s families, workforce, and economic future.

Sincerely,



Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children

