

March 26, 2025

Senate Bill 5515
Funding for Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

To the Joint Ways and Means Committee,

I am Kevin Anderson, Administrator with the Multnomah Early Childhood Program with the David Douglas School District in Portland. We provide the birth to 5 services across all of Multnomah County in eight school districts.

Across the state of Oregon EI/ECSE programs served over 14,500 children and families last year. My program alone serves over 3,000 children and families in a wide variety of settings. We are the largest program in the state. These programs see an average growth of 3-5% each year in the number of children they serve.

The EI/ECSE program is funded through the grant in aid budget, yet must follow all of the same laws and rules that apply to K-12 special education programs. We are a federally mandated program and must offer services to all eligible children. We cannot have waitlists and are under very strict timelines for the provision of services. We have 45 days from the date of referral to have children under the age of 3 into service if they qualify. Most grant in aid programs do not have this mandated caseload.

Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education are the first opportunity for our most vulnerable to receive essential services. Through the provision of weekly services we are able to significantly impact the development and the educational trajectory for Oregon's youngest learners. EI/ECSE programs ensure that children going into kindergarten receive the supports and accommodations they need to be successful.

The current budget allocation for EI/ECSE programs is \$408 million. I encourage this committee to fund these programs with an additional \$24 million in order to provide adequate service levels to all eligible children across Oregon.

With respect,

Kevin Anderson
Program Administrator
Multnomah Early Childhood Program