

Submitter: Anna Kohl
On Behalf Of: Adalynn
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means Subcommittee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB5526

Dear Chairs Valderrama and Campos and Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Human Services,

I am writing to express my support for Oregon's Regional Family Networks and to share the impact that Families Connected/Familias en Conexión- the Regional Family Network serving Lane County has had on my family's life.

Families Connected/Familias en Conexión is a family-led organization supporting parents in their journey of raising children with intellectual and developmental disabilities across Lane County. Families Connected and Familias en Conexión provides information, resources and culturally responsive support to families across a geographically expansive county.

In 2023-2024, Families Connected/Familias en Conexión:

- Provided support to more than 1,055 families
- Hosted 134 parent trainings and family events with 8,796 people in attendance •
- Partnered with 365 community agencies

Many families raising children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, especially in rural and Latinx communities, face deep systemic barriers. Families Connected & Familias en Conexion provides:

- Culturally grounded, bilingual programs and family support
- Accessible, neurodiversity-affirming family events, such as our biannual Strength in Neurodiversity festivals
- Host Sensory Zones at community events to reduce isolation and encourage active family participation in their communities
- Provide disability awareness trainings to community partners, faith-based institutions and schools
- Help families navigate education, medical and disability service systems
- Host skill-building trainings to empower parents to advocate and plan for a positive and possible future for their children

Regional Family Networks are a lifeline for parents raising children with disabilities. The Family Networks help reduce isolation and the number of families going into crisis. The Family Networks strengthen families by giving them hope and direction.

Sincerely,

Anna Kohl