



Achieve with us.

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

My name is Pam Ring, and I am the executive director of Lane County. I am writing to express my strong support for Oregon's Regional Family Networks and to highlight the significant impact that Families Connected/Familias en Conexión, the Regional Family Network serving Lane County, has had on our families.

Families Connected/Familias en Conexión is a family-led organization dedicated to supporting parents in their journey of raising children with intellectual and developmental disabilities throughout Lane County. This organization provides invaluable information, resources, and culturally responsive support to families who might otherwise struggle in an expansive and diverse geographic region.

In the 2023-2024 period, Families Connected/Familias en Conexión accomplished remarkable milestones:

- Provided support to more than 1,055 families.
- Hosted 134 parent trainings and family events, drawing an impressive attendance of 8,796 individuals.
- Partnered with 365 community agencies, fostering collaboration and resource sharing throughout the region.

Families raising children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, particularly in rural and Latinx communities, often encounter significant systemic barriers. Families Connected/Familias en Conexión addresses these challenges through a range of initiatives, including:

- Providing culturally grounded, bilingual programs and family support that resonate with the unique needs of the community.
- Hosting accessible, neurodiversity-affirming family events, such as the biannual Strength in Neurodiversity festivals.
- Setting up Sensory Zones that reduce isolation and encourage active participation from families at community events.
- Facilitating disability awareness trainings for community partners, faith-based institutions, and educational settings.
- Assistance for families in navigating education, medical, and disability service systems effectively.
- Facilitating skill-building trainings that empower parents to advocate for their children and plan for a positive future.

Regional Family Networks serve as a critical lifeline for parents raising children with disabilities. They help mitigate feelings of isolation and reduce the risk of families entering crisis situations. By providing hope, direction, and connection, the Family Networks strengthen families and build resilient communities.

Thank you for considering the essential role that Families Connected/Familias en Conexión and other Regional Family Networks play in our community. I urge you to support these vital services that uplift and empower families across Oregon.

Pam Ring, Executive Director