

Submitter: Andrea Bartell
On Behalf Of: Young Roots Oregon
Committee: Senate Committee On Human Services
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1197

Greetings, Young Roots Oregon is a non-profit who supports adolescent parents and their children in Linn and Benton counties. Since September 2023, we have been able to provide license-exempt respite care for the children of adolescent parents. License-exempt allows the child to be cared for but the parent must stay on site.

This has been a really amazing gift to so many young parents, to just have a rest, mentally and emotional from their parenting responsibilities. We have taught our community of young parents the importance of self care to restore themselves so they can have more positive parenting. Most young parents are isolated, bound within a poverty state that nurtures toxic stress and adverse childhood experiences for their children.

Young parents use respite care for anything from taking a nap on our couch, to reading a book without onteruption, to making important phone calls that are impossible to make successfully when kids are present, to working on their GED, meeting with a financial coach, receiving onsite counseling, attend a parenting class, meet with their mentor, or just be. Respite allows for mental, emotional and physical space from the stress and tension of parenting.

Despite this service being so valuable, we do not have funding streams that support this service. This bill would allow for organizations like ourselves to continue the opportuntiy of increasing protective factors surrounding young families. This bill could also provide our organization to become licensed so that way parents could step off site to take drivers education, to increase their personal physical and behavioral health by helping them to attend their own personal medical appointments, or to access resources and food within the community.

Respite care decreases the stress level of parents who do not have outside positive and safe support in their lives. Respite care decreases the likelihood of adverse childhood experiences for their children that cause harm to their physical and mental health through our their life span. This is a way we can help increase the safety net surrounding marginalized and at-risk families.

Thank you for considering the positive outcomes that respite care can give to families in our state reducing costs of intervention and reactive care that continues on for generations.

Sincerely,

Andrea Bartell
Executive Director
Young Roots Oregon