

Wednesday, April 30, 2025

**RE: Early Childhood Education Workforce Development Fund (HB 3011) in HECC Budget (SB 5525)**

Co-Chairs Sollman & Ruiz and members of the Committee,

My name is Dana Hepper, and I work at Children's Institute. I'm here in support of a \$5 million investment in higher education on-campus child care programs (as proposed in HB 3011).

**Approximately 20% of Oregon's undergraduate students are parents or guardians of dependent children.** Access to quality child care is essential to support foundational development for children, economic stability and academic success of parents, and to support these families to thrive. This proposed \$5 million will stabilize and grow on-campus child care programs across Oregon.

**In addition, this investment supports Oregon's college students enrolled in ECE degree programs – who feed the overall early learning and child care workforce.**

Campus ECE centers serve as learning labs for students pursuing ECE degrees and related degrees including special education, early intervention, psychology, and human physiology. Students earning degrees in early childhood benefit from access to quality placement sites where they can learn best practices for supporting child development. Trained and skilled child care providers experience less burnout and stay in the profession longer. Furthermore, children benefit when their caregivers have a strong foundation in child development and extensive quality practicum placements.

Oregon faces a significant shortage of accessible, affordable, quality early learning & child care options. This is an economic barrier holding our state back from expanding the workforce. When we invest in early childhood education, we benefit our state's economy.

**I urge your support for \$5 million for campus child care programs.**

HB 3011 and \$5 million investment is supported by these Early Childhood Coalition partners, along with others:

Adelante Mujeres

Ballmer Institute

Children's Institute

FACT Oregon

First Children's Finance

Families First Child Care Center

Happy Go Lucky Child Care

IRCO

Marion Polk Early Learning Hub

Metropolitan Family Service

Neighborhood House

Northwest Regional ESD

Nurse-Family Partnership

Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries

ORAEYC

Oregon Head Start Association

Our Children Oregon

Prevent Child Abuse Oregon

Reach Out & Read

Southern Oregon Early Learning Services

Yamhill Community Care

Social Venture Partners Portland