

# YES on HB 2503 + SB 239

## Child Care is Essential for Oregon's Recovery



**Access to child care is necessary for joyful children, thriving families, and a strong economy.** But Oregon is falling behind and our state's inability to build a supply of quality, affordable, and equitable child care options for working families threatens the safe and healthy development of our most vulnerable young children.

**In order to rebuild supply, the Oregon Legislature must:** 1) Unify all child care projects under one early learning and child care agency, and 2) Protect our current investments in the Employment Related Day Care program (ERDC) and spend this funding to better serve eligible children and the providers that serve them.

### Background

Today, Oregon parents pay double what the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recommends a family pay for child care (no more than 7% of your income), and single-parent families pay closer to five times that amount. Without affordable, accessible child care options, many parents are faced with little choice but to leave their jobs. **In fact, nearly 80% of the 1.1 million people who left the job market in September 2020 were women.**<sup>1</sup>

We had a child care crisis before COVID—this pandemic is revealing how significant that problem has always been. **The crisis is worse now with 50% of Oregon's pre-COVID child care slots gone. And 40% of providers are closed, unlikely to ever reopen.**<sup>2</sup>

#### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> [www.npr.org/2020/10/20/925944351/why-women-are-leaving-the-workforce](http://www.npr.org/2020/10/20/925944351/why-women-are-leaving-the-workforce)

<sup>2</sup> [www.opb.org/news/article/oregons-childcare-system-faces-uncertain-future/](http://www.opb.org/news/article/oregons-childcare-system-faces-uncertain-future/)

<sup>3</sup> [www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes399011.htm](http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes399011.htm)

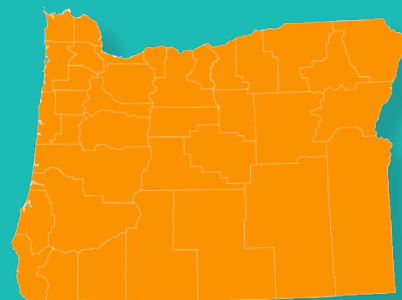
<sup>4</sup> [health.oregonstate.edu/sites/health.oregonstate.edu/files/early-learners/pdf/oregon-child-care-deserts-01-29-2019.pdf](http://health.oregonstate.edu/sites/health.oregonstate.edu/files/early-learners/pdf/oregon-child-care-deserts-01-29-2019.pdf)

### What We Need to Fix

Child care policy has been shaped by a history of systemic and structural racism. **Child care workers are disproportionately women of color<sup>3</sup>, and their incredibly low wages reflect the combined institutional racism, sexism and devaluation they experience.**

Child care is primarily funded by families that cannot afford the true costs associated with care for children. While parents are unable to afford care, child care providers are not charging enough to cover the costs to provide care. Young children need responsive and nurturing relationships with caregivers to stimulate their growing brains, but the current funding structure creates barriers to access, and as a result **every one of Oregon's 36 counties is a child care desert for at least one age group of children.**<sup>4</sup>

**That means there are 3+ children for every one child care spot.**



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Learn more about our coalition by visiting [childcarefororegon.org](http://childcarefororegon.org).



Child Care That Works. For Every Family.

# Solutions That Work YES on HB 2503 + SB 239



The need for sustained public investment has never been clearer. It will take a long-term, sustained effort to build a new publicly funded statewide child care system that is universal, equitable, and truly works for all our families. In the meantime, **we can start by passing HB 2503 and SB 239** to:

- **Protect our current investments** in the ERDC program.
- **Streamline governance** by housing ERDC with other early learning and child care programs.
- **Ensure affordability for parents** by capping copays to no more than 7% of a family's income.
- **Increase the flexibility of the program** for parents to utilize their child care assistance outside of just working hours.
- **Expand access to all children**, regardless of documentation status.
- **Protect eligibility for children** for at least one year, increasing financial stability for providers and continuity of care for children.
- **Provide financial stability to providers** by paying based on enrollment—not attendance, protecting eligibility for children for at least one year, setting rates for providers based on the true cost of care.

## Child care that works. For every family.

Child Care for Oregon is a coalition working to build a comprehensive child care system in Oregon. We believe that those who are most affected by inequities are in the best position to offer solutions. This is especially key for addressing Oregon's child care crisis, which has significant consequences for Black, Indigenous, and families and providers of color.



Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children

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