



VOICES UNITED.
OPPORTUNITY REIMAGINED.

March 29, 2021

Joint Subcommittee on Education
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

RE: Testimony on SB 5513

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-Chair McLain, and Members of the Committee,

Our Children Oregon's (OCO) mission is to be a voice and force for the common good for all Oregon children, ensuring all children have the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential. OCO is the result of the merger between two historic Oregon non-profits: The Children's Trust Fund of Oregon and Children First for Oregon. We elevate data and lived experience to prioritize children and center communities. We continue to connect a community of 115 advocates, coalitions, and organizations through The Children's Agenda, a legislative agenda championing equitable state legislative policies and shared investments to improving the lives of Oregon's children and their families.

To increase equity and access in our early childhood system and foster Oregon's short- and long-term economic recovery, we must serve more children and families with early childhood programs that are culturally relevant, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate. Oregon started to make progress with the Student Success Act, however, most Oregon children who are eligible for services lack access.

To continue Oregon's progress, this session Our Children Oregon joins the Early Childhood Coalition in supporting a base of Current Service Level for all early care and education investments, including Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education, Oregon PreKindergarten Head Start, Preschool Promise, Early Childhood Equity Fund, Relief Nurseries, Healthy Families Oregon, Early Learning Hubs, parenting education, and professional development.

In addition, we are supporting a package of \$127 million in investments to continue to increase access to the tens of thousands of children who are eligible but lack access to inclusive, culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate early care and education.

This package will:

- Prevent suspension and expulsion in early childhood programs with a \$5.8 million investment in professional support for educators.

The Children's Agenda

is a broad slate of equitable investments and policy solutions to meet the holistic needs of Oregon children, youth, and their families.



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- Begin the process to create a Tribal Early Learning Hub with \$900,000 in planning funds.
- Increase access to quality early learning for 7,000 children with a \$103.3 million investment (\$35.8 m for OPK, \$64.1 m for Preschool Promise, and \$3.4 m for Equity Fund)
- Provide wage parity for Relief Nursery staff with a \$4.8 million investment to reduce turnover and increase consistency for 3500 children served.
- Increase the number of families served and prepare for future growth in Healthy Families Oregon with a \$10 million investment in slots, wages, data, and staffing.
- Provide early access to books through medical clinics with a \$75,000 investment in Reach Out and Read.
- Expand access to parenting education with a \$2 million investment.

We support the Early Childhood Coalition's 2021 legislative agenda which is guided by the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and families of color, and families and providers historically excluded from policy and budget decisions. We join the Early Childhood Coalition in asking legislators to commit to continued improvement in early care, education, and support for all of Oregon's young children and families and to center the voices of those most impacted by legislative actions in your decision-making processes.

On behalf of the Our Children Oregon team,

Chis Coughlin, Policy, Advocacy, and Engagement Director

View the 2021 Children's Agenda at www.ourchildrenoregon.org/2021-childrens-agenda