

## Governor Brown's Budget Must Protect and Increase Funding for Early Childhood

For Immediate Release

December 1, 2016

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Children's Institute commends Governor Brown for her commitment to early childhood and holding early childhood programs harmless in her budget. However, Oregon has the 3<sup>rd</sup> worst graduation rate in the nation and this will not change until more children arrive to kindergarten prepared for school success.

Investments in young children and their families are the most cost-effective strategies to improve long-term outcomes for children. Disparities in early experiences can lead to significant differences by kindergarten. Kids who aren't ready for school fall behind by third grade, and reading proficiency at the end of third grade is an important predictor of high school graduation. Programs like Early Intervention save the state millions of dollars annually by reducing the need for special education spending in kindergarten. In 2014-2015, more than 21 percent of children who used Early Intervention services had caught up with their peers and did not require Early Childhood Special Education.

Even with Governor Brown's leadership, 30,000 low-income children still lack access to high-quality preschool. When the most vulnerable young children do not receive high-quality early education, they are 25 percent more likely to drop out of high school, 50 percent more likely to need special education intervention, and 60 percent less likely to attend college.

With budget pressures facing our state now and for the foreseeable future, we cannot afford to simply maintain funding levels for the programs and services that are proven to both deliver results for our kids now and save money in the long-term. Currently, 75 percent of Oregon's vulnerable children are not being served or not receiving adequate early childhood services. The cost of not investing wisely in young children is continued abysmal graduation rates, lost opportunities, squandered potential, and rising costs for social services. Children's Institute strongly encourages state legislators to protect and increase wise investments in early childhood education and development. From Astoria to Yoncalla, Burns to Klamath Falls, Oregon's most vulnerable children benefit from high-quality early childhood programs and services. We call on Oregon's lawmakers to continue to prioritize these cost-effective, high impact investments.

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*Children's Institute is one of Oregon's leading voices for increased public investment in high-quality early childhood education and healthy development, the most cost-effective strategies to improve long-term outcomes for children.*