

Oregon Early Childhood Coalition Legislative Agenda

3/15/19

THE NEED

Oregon is experiencing an early childhood crisis. Not enough young children are getting the early care and education they need for success in school and life. We need to invest early in children's health, safety, and development. Prenatal to 5 years old is the most significant period of brain development and sets the foundation for all future learning and life experiences.

Today, 47 percent of all children birth to 5 years old in Oregon live in low-income households, and most don't have access to programs and services proven to improve educational and economic outcomes. During the 2019 legislative session, policy makers must prioritize young children and their families in budget and policy decisions. When we invest in young children and their families, whole communities thrive.

There is no time to waste.

OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD CRISIS

- 47 percent of children birth to 5 live in low-income households.
- 42 percent of children in the child welfare system are 5 years old or younger.
- Oregon is the **third most expensive state** in the nation for child care.
- Early Head Start only reaches 10 percent of eligible children.
- Only 29 percent of children in Early Intervention receive the recommended levels of service.
- Only 1 in 50 children with high needs (delays in most or all areas of development) receive the recommended levels of Early Intervention service.
- 30,000 eligible children lack access to publicly funded preschool.
- Only 47 percent of third graders are reading on grade level. That number is even lower for low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and English language learners.
- Voluntary home visiting reaches less than 20 percent of eligible families.

OUR VISION

The Oregon Early Childhood Coalition knows that every child needs positive, nurturing relationships with their parents and caregivers and access to high-quality health care, early care, and education. Young children who experience barriers to opportunity due to poverty, race/ethnicity, disability, language, or geographic location don't often have access to the proven programs and services that support healthy development when their growing brains need to be nurtured most. When they do, these children are more likely to live healthier lives with better educational and economic outcomes. To meaningfully address Oregon's early childhood crisis, we must prioritize the 129,000 young children currently living in low-income households. If we make a significant, sustained investment in young children and their families, Oregon can become the best place to be pregnant, the best place to have a baby, and the best place to be a kid.



CHILD CARE

\$62.8 M

Create Baby Promise to provide more safe, quality child care slots for the children of working parents.	\$10 million
Reduce parent co-pays for child care to make the program accessible to more working families.	\$13 million
Increase funding for child care subsidies to serve an additional 1,000 families. (This restores a 2017 funding cut.)	\$20 million
Increase the number of child care licensing specialists . Oregon currently employs less than one-third the recommended number of licensors.	\$1.5 million
Increase support for child care providers to better recruit, train, and retain providers and enable them to serve more children.	\$18.3 million
Create a child care task force to assess the child care landscape, establish a vision for child care in Oregon, and bring recommendations to the 2021 legislature.	\$TBD

EARLY LEARNING

\$376.5 M

Establish an Early Childhood Equity Fund to support culturally specific early learning, early childhood, and parent support programs across the state.	\$20 million
Increase service levels of Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education to support kindergarten readiness for children with disabilities and delays.	\$75 million
Increase funding to Oregon Pre-kindergarten and Early Head Start to serve more children, increase hours of service, provide transportation, and increase teacher pay.	\$101.3 million
Expand access to Preschool Promise to 6,600 low-income children who are eligible for the program but currently can't attend due to under-funding.	\$169.7 million
Strengthen early childhood degree programs and provide scholarships and mentoring to early childhood educators through the Professional Development Consortia .	\$7 million
Create regional centers of excellence to promote best practices in teaching and transitions and alignment between preschool and K-12.	\$3.5 million

PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

\$21.65 M

Open two new Relief Nurseries and seven satellite sites, as well as enable Relief Nurseries to make use of existing infrastructure to serve families on waiting lists.	\$5.6 million
Expand Healthy Families Oregon , our largest statewide voluntary home visiting program for prenatal to age 3, in order to serve more families.	\$9.8 million
Invest in parenting education programs to help parents develop, practice, and improve positive parenting skills to strengthen parent-child bonds and nurture healthy development.	\$2 million
Invest in Family Connects (universally available home visiting) to provide new parents the option of nurse visit in the first weeks after returning home with a newborn.	\$4 million
Expand Reach Out & Read , a primary care service that promotes evidence-based, culturally responsive literacy and parent-child attachment.	\$250,000