

# 2021 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

All children are born full of potential, yet young children who experience barriers to opportunity due to racism, classism, and other forms of discriminatory policy and practice are often denied access to proven programs and services that strengthen early learning and healthy development. **Before the age of 5, a child's brain makes one million new neural connections every second** with early experiences shaping brain architecture. This stage of complex neural, social, and emotional development makes early childhood a critical window in which to eliminate disparities.

Children ages 0-5 are the most racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse Oregonians, and they are also the group most likely to live in poverty. Children born during the COVID-19 pandemic will be entering kindergarten just as we're climbing out of a recession, and decisions made during this session will influence the trajectory of their lives and Oregon's future.

Our 2021 agenda is guided by the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and families of color, and families and providers historically excluded from policy and budget decisions and it is just the tip of the iceberg. These priorities, coupled with the historic passage of the Student Success Act, are the first steps toward implementing comprehensive change needed to build an early childhood system which addresses generations of exclusion and discrimination.

When racial equity is at the center of decision-making, early childhood programs and services can mitigate disparities by race/ethnicity, income, geography, disability, language, immigrant and refugee status, houselessness, and foster care. **We ask legislators to commit to continued improvement in early care, education, and supports for all of Oregon's young children and families.** Solutions must be built with families, to work for them.



# ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY

These proposals, designed by and for impacted communities, will improve early childhood experiences for Black and Indigenous children and children of color.

**Reduce/Eliminate Suspension and Expulsion in Early Care and Education Programs\*\*** **\$5.8 million**

Senate Bill 236, House Bill 2166  
Lead advocates: Black Child Development-PDX & Children's Institute

**Create an Early Childhood Equity in Access Report**

Senate Bill 237  
Lead advocates: Children's Institute, in partnership with the Equity Collaborative

**Compel Congress to Keep Children and Families Safe from ICE in Early Childhood Settings**

Senate Joint Memorial 1  
Lead advocates: Latino Network & Children's Institute

**Create a Tribal Early Learning Hub\*\*** **\$900,000**

House Bill 2055, ELD POP 406

# EXPAND EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENTS

Every child deserves access to early childhood programs that are culturally relevant, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate. Oregon started to make progress with the Student Success Act, and more is needed to reach all children and families who are eligible.

**Expand Access to Culturally Relevant, Inclusive, Developmentally Appropriate Preschool and Early Learning\*\*** **\$103.3 million**

ELD POP 402  
Lead Advocates: Oregon Head Start Association, Children's Institute & Latino Network

**Provide Wage Parity for Relief Nurseries** **\$4.8 million**

Lead Advocate: Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries

**Expand Funding for Healthy Families Oregon Home Visiting\*** **\$10 million**

Lead Advocate: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids & Ready Nation

**Expand Reach Out and Read to Underserved Families\*\*** **Restore \$75,000**

Lead Advocate: Reach Out and Read Oregon

# STRENGTHEN THE CHILD CARE SYSTEM

Oregon's child care system isn't effectively meeting the needs of children, parents, providers, or Oregon's economic recovery. Children born during COVID-19 will turn 5 as we exit a recession. Oregon must start now to build the system we need.

**Reform Child Care Subsidy to Work for Children and Families**

House Bill 2503/Senate Bill 239  
Lead Advocate: Family Forward Oregon

**Ensure Child Care Providers can Operate in Rentals**

House Bill 2484  
Lead Advocates: AFSCME & Children's Institute

# INVEST IN FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

Children ages 0-5 are the Oregonians most likely to live in poverty. Under-resourced families now face additional burdens because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Children need us to invest in their families and communities during this difficult time and beyond.

**Protect and Grow Flexible Funding for Early Learning Hubs** **Restore \$1.4 million**

Lead Advocates: Early Learning Hub Leaders & Eames Consulting

**Increase Access to Nurse-Family Partnership Home Visiting by Using State Funds for Medicaid Match** **Up to \$5 million**

Lead Advocate: Nurse-Family Partnership

**Invest in New, Affordable Housing for Families, Rural Communities, and Communities of Color** **\$250 million in Article XI-Q Bonds**

Lead Advocate: Oregon Housing Alliance

**Support College Students, Many of Whom are Parents, to Access Food and Basic Needs Assistance** **\$4 million**

Lead Advocate: Hunger Free Oregon

**Strengthen Family Support and Create More Accessible Communities by Reinstating Funding for Family to Family Networks** **Restore \$1.3 million**

Lead Advocate: Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities

