



OREGON EARLY CHILDHOOD COALITION



CHILDINST.ORG/ECC

2021 LEGISLATIVE REPORT



WHAT HAPPENED FOR YOUNG CHILDREN IN THE 2021 LEGISLATIVE SESSION?

The Early Childhood Coalition's (ECC) 2021 legislative agenda was built by listening to community partners and prioritizing proposals that had the greatest impact on communities furthest from justice. Parents, early childhood providers, and community organizations led the Coalition to advance early childhood policies that reduced inequities for young children and families, and elevated the critical message that, in order for our state to move forward, all of Oregon's children need access to the resources and supports necessary to thrive.

Together, we testified at bill hearings and met with 21 legislators during Early Childhood Advocacy Days. The Oregon legislature listened and responded by passing several policies that advance racial equity in early childhood, expand early childhood investments, strengthen the child care system, and invest in families and communities.

Highlights from the 2021 legislative session include a Department of Education budget with **increased funding for many early childhood programs to serve an additional 4,000 children**, the **creation of a tribal early learning hub**, a reform of Oregon's **child care subsidy system**, and **bills to eliminate suspension and expulsion** in early care and education programs. The ECC would like to thank our partners and the elected officials who helped make this progress possible.

Not every policy or budget item prioritized by the ECC passed, and there is much more work to do to create a legislative process that is welcoming and accessible to parents and providers; especially those who have been most impacted by systemic injustice, and excluded from the political process.

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2021 ECC LEGISLATIVE AGENDA SUPPORTERS

Parents, providers, and community organizations from across Oregon raised our collective voices to call for action.



EARLY CHILDHOOD LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Advance Racial Equity with Community-Driven Solutions

✓ **HB 2166:** Directs the Early Learning Division to develop a program to prevent suspension and expulsion. (Lead Advocate: Black Child Development PDX)

✓ **SB 236:** Bans suspension and expulsion in early childhood programs by July 2026. (Lead Advocate: Black Child Development PDX)

"Let's not give up on this child. Because the moment we give up on that child [is] the moment we say to him or to her, 'you're not worthy, you're not important enough to get an education.'"
– Lydia Gray-Holifield, parent, on SB 236

✗ **SB 237:** Created an Early Childhood Equity in Access Report. ECC decided not to actively pursue this legislation in 2021. (Lead Advocate: Equity Collaborative)

✓ **HB 2055:** Initiates a process to create an Early Learning Hub across Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes.

✗ **SJM 1:** Called upon Congress to codify ICE's sensitive locations policy, which defines the scope of allowable enforcement actions at schools, churches, and health centers. (Lead Advocate: Latino Network)

"It's about allowing families to move through life's ups and downs with a sense of dignity and respect."
– Anthony Castaneda, Latino Network, on SJM 1

Strengthen the Child Care System

✓ **HB 3073:** Makes needed improvements to Oregon's largest child care subsidy program and establishes a new state agency focused on early childhood: the Department of Early Learning and Care. (Lead Advocate: Family Forward Oregon)

"I'm supporting HB 3073 because we need to set up a seamless system that works together to support our youngest children, knowing that by supporting them in these critical years, we are setting them up to be successful and thrive later in life."
– Kali Thorne Ladd, Early Learning Council member and Children's Institute CEO, on HB 3073

✗ **HB 2484:** Would have ensured child care providers operating in rental homes would not be discriminated against by landlords. (Lead Advocates: AFSCME & Children's Institute)

"I would just say my name, and that I'm looking for a home and I provide child care, and instantly, 'No, sorry.'"
– Diana Adams, child care provider looking for a rental home, on HB 2484

KEY

- ✓ = Passed
- ✗ = Did not pass
- = Partially passed/funded

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES CONTINUED

Expand Early Childhood Investments

- **HB 5513:** ODE Grant in Aid Budget
 - \$103.3 million to expand access to culturally relevant, inclusive, developmentally appropriate preschool and early learning to 6,000 more children (**\$70.1 million & 4,000 children funded**). (Lead Advocates: Children’s Institute, Head Start, and Latino Network)
 - \$4.8 million to provide wage parity for relief nurseries (**\$2 million funded**). (Lead Advocate: Oregon Association of Relief Nurseries)
 - \$10 million to expand funding for Healthy Families Oregon Home Visiting (**\$829,000 funded**). (Lead Advocate: Fight Crime: Invest in Kids)
 - \$75,000 to expand Reach Out and Read to Underserved Families (**\$2 million funded**). (Lead Advocate: Reach Out & Read Oregon)
 - \$2 million to expand access to parenting education (**\$2 million funded**). (Lead advocate: Oregon Community Foundation)
 - \$1.4 million to restore Early Learning Hub funding (**\$1.4 million funded**). (Lead Advocate: Early Learning Hubs)

Invest in Families and Communities

- ✗ **\$5 million** to increase access to Nurse-Family Partnership by using state funds for the required Medicaid match. (Lead Advocate: Nurse-Family Partnership)
- ✓ **SB 5505:** Funds the development of affordable housing for families. (Lead Advocate: Oregon Housing Alliance)
- ✓ **HB 2835:** Provides benefits navigators at colleges and universities, where students who are also parents experience disproportionate rates of food insecurity. (Lead Advocate: Hunger Free Oregon)
- ✓ **SB 5529:** Funds Family to Family Networks, provides tools for parents to build healthier families, be stronger advocates for their children, and be active in their communities. (Lead Advocate: Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities)



OUR ELECTED CHAMPIONS

We thank Governor Kate Brown and Oregon legislators who championed early childhood this legislative session.



ACCESS TO EDUCATION PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN ENSURING THAT OUR CHILDREN AND STUDENTS FROM OUR COMMUNITIES THAT HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY UNDERSERVED RECEIVE SERVICES THEY NEED TO REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL. NOW, MORE THAN EVER, IT IS CRITICAL THAT WE TAKE ACTION TO MEET THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN.

- GOV. KATE BROWN



We thank the Early Childhood Committee for their work to make young children and their families a priority this session, and members of the Black, Indigenous, People of Color Caucus, who elevated early childhood as key to advancement of racial justice for all Oregonians.

EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMITTEE

- Chair Karin Power
- Vice Chair Lisa Reynolds
- Vice Chair Jack Zika
- Rep. John Lively
- Rep. Courtney Neron
- Rep. Sherri Schouten
- Rep. Suzanne Weber
- Rep. Boomer Wright

BLACK, INDIGENOUS, PEOPLE OF COLOR CAUCUS

- Sen. Lew Frederick
- Sen. Kayse Jama
- Sen. James I. Manning Jr.
- Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon
- Rep. Janelle Bynum
- Rep. Mark Meek
- Rep. Khanh Pham
- Rep. Ricki Ruiz
- Rep. Andrea Salinas
- Rep. Tawna Sanchez
- Rep. Andrea Valderrama

BILL CARRIERS



Sen. Michael Dembrow
(D-Portland)
SB 236, SJM 1



Sen. Lew Frederick
(D-Portland)
HB 2166, HB 2055,
HB 5513



Sen. Kathleen Taylor
(D-Milwaukie)
HB 3073



Rep. Teresa Alonso Leon
(D-Woodburn)
HB 2166



Rep. Karin Power
(D-Milwaukie)
HB 2483, HB 3073,
SB 236



Rep. Susan McLain
(D-Hillsboro)
HB 2055, HB 5513



Rep. Jack Zika
(R-Redmond)
HB 3073

We thank Sen. Gelser and Rep. Bynum for their work on SB 236. They supported the policy leadership of Black Child Development PDX and the public support building efforts of Reimagine Oregon on suspension and expulsion of young children. These legislators spoke passionately in support of SB 236 during hearings and floor votes and worked behind the scenes to move this bill forward.

“Kids with disabilities don’t need to be someplace else, kids with disabilities need to be exactly where all the other students are.” - **Sen. Gelser on SB 236**

“It is unfair for children to be kicked out of care settings. It’s not right. It means that care workers get to not invest in loving our children unconditionally.” - **Rep. Bynum on SB 236**

And we thank Rep. Neron for her work on HB 3073. She supported the work of the Child Care for Oregon Coalition and played a critical role in securing child care subsidy reforms in HB 3073.

“The stability of our child care workforce affects our children’s ability to feel secure and establish bonds they need to grow and thrive, not just while in care, but well into the future.” - **Rep. Neron on HB 3073**

WHAT'S NEXT?

Oregon's legislature is headed in the right direction, and there is much more work to be done. Our publicly funded early childhood system continues to serve only a fraction of eligible children and families and does not yet eliminate disparities by race/ethnicity, indigeneity, income, geography, disability, language, immigrant and refugee status, houselessness or foster care.

Wages, benefits, and other opportunities for professional growth in the early childhood sector continue to lag behind K-12 and other comparable professions.

Black people, Indigenous people, people of color, immigrant and refugee families, parents of children with disabilities, and families in remote or rural areas of the state continue to be excluded from decision-making and other opportunities to exercise political power. These facts compel us to continue to make progress.

Early childhood investments are the smartest investments our state can make. For every \$1 allocated toward early childhood programs, the state yields economic returns of up to \$16, while boosting high school graduation, college matriculation, and household incomes.

During the 2022 short legislative session, we will ask Oregon legislators to work with and for our most impacted communities, and to finish what they started in 2021, including:

- Providing protection to child care providers operating in rental homes, who are more likely to be women of color and immigrants
- Continuing to build and align the early childhood system by making progress on wages in early childhood programs, including Relief Nurseries and Healthy Families Oregon

The Early Childhood Coalition looks ahead to the 2023 legislative session as a time for unsurpassed commitment to equity, accessibility, and accountability. We will work together and in partnership with parents to build a legislative agenda directly informed by the voices, needs, and wisdom of community members.

WE WILL CALL UPON THE LEGISLATURE TO REIMAGINE POLICY BUILDING AS INCLUSIVE, UPLIFTING, AND AS A CELEBRATION OF COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION. AND WE WILL WORK WITH INTENTION TO DISMANTLE SYSTEMIC BARRIERS FOR OUR CHILDREN FURTHEST FROM JUSTICE UNTIL ALL OF OREGON'S CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO THE SUPPORTS AND OPPORTUNITIES NECESSARY TO THRIVE.