



2023 Legislative Priorities

Our entire economy is dependent on equitable access to child care. Like roads and bridges, affordable, high-quality child care is necessary infrastructure. Parents need affordable child care that provides a peace of mind that their children are learning and loved. Employers need their employees to have access to reliable, affordable child care so they can return to work. And children need high-quality, joyful care that stimulates early brain development and supports success in school and beyond.

While our state has taken necessary steps and made critical investments to address the child crisis in the last two years, without continued investment in child care infrastructure—supply-building, facilities, workforce investments, affordability, access—this crisis will continue to have a devastating economic impact on those who are already financially vulnerable: the disproportionately Black, Indigenous, and women of color who make up the child care workforce, low-income and families of color who struggle to access the quality care they need, and children, whose developing brains make early childhood a critical window for eliminating inequity.

Background

Federal COVID funds (\$224M) were used in Oregon to send direct grants to providers working under impossible conditions: reduced ratios, heightened safety measures, inconsistent enrollment. Operating grants did help many child care businesses survive the height of the pandemic; however, in a recent survey of over 200 providers across the state¹, providers indicated that financial support is still their most urgent need. Providers that have remained open are struggling to serve their communities at full capacity:

- 64% decrease in number of programs serving 100+ children
- 40% of programs still open are operating at 76% capacity to pre-COVID
- One third have not been able to rehire staff that were laid off or furloughed

¹ Statewide survey of 200 child care providers conducted August 2021: childcarefororegon.org/survey



Oregon Association for the Education of Young Children



2023 Legislative Priorities for Child Care



Increase Affordability & Access

All of us depend on a child care system that works. Oregon currently only funds ERDC to serve about 12% of eligible families. For state-funded early learning programs, we only serve 30% of the eligible population.

We must continue the progress we've made funding quality and accessible early learning and child care. Families will also need assistance navigating the ONE eligibility process.

Support Workforce Development

We currently see annual turnover in the child care workforce of between 25-30% in Oregon. The stability of our economy and the social and emotional well-being of our kids depends on us addressing low compensation in the sector.

Create Child Care Infrastructure

Even if we fully funded our programs and paid our providers the wages they deserved, families would still struggle to find care because we lack adequate physical space for all children who need care.

It's critical that we invest in suitable child care infrastructure to meet the growing need for affordable, reliable, and quality child care.

Adequately fund Department of Early Learning & Care (DELIC) POP 102 to implement the 2021 legislatively-approved changes to Oregon's child care assistance program

Fund trusted CBOs to provide navigation services to families who should be eligible for Child Care assistance (HB 3027)

Fund DELIC POP 104 to increase slots for Baby Promise

Fund DELIC POP 101 to increase access to existing early learning programs

Remove unnecessary barriers to professional credentials for child care workers (HB 2991)

Create an incentive and assistance program for child care workforce modeled after the medical providers program (HB 3029)

Create an Early Learning & Care Facilities Fund and continue co-location with affordable housing investments (HB 3005)

Protect child care providers operating in rental homes (SB 599)

Examine and address how zoning regulations, state and local building codes and permitting practices inhibit or support expansion of early learning and care facilities (HB 2727)

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