

To: House Early Childhood & Human Services Committee
From: Curt Wilson, AIA, Wilson Architecture
Date: Tuesday, February 18, 2025
Re: HB 3496 - Best Practices Guide for Citing & Incentivizing Child Care

Chair Hartman, Vice Chairs Scharf & Nguyen, and members of the Committee,

My name is Curt Wilson and I'm an architect in Eugene. I represented my professional colleagues of the American Institute of Architects Oregon Chapter as a member of the HB 2727 Child Care Planning Workgroup in 2024. Participating in this diverse group of providers, public policy advisors, and planner and design professionals laid bare the challenges day care providers must navigate to develop and expand their businesses. As a grandparent of a toddler, this topic is a very high priority for my family.

Access to quality child care supports children's developing brains and bodies. Child care supports parents ability to work and attend college. And child care supports the economy, allowing companies to fill open positions with a ready workforce. In short, Oregon kids, families, and businesses need child care.

Yet, most counties in Oregon are child care deserts. To expand child care, we need workable physical locations, skilled workforce, and operating subsidies. HB 3496 supports efforts to find suitable child care locations. The legislation directs the Department of Land Conservation and Development to create model code and a best practice guide to make it easy for cities and counties to do the right thing - make it easier for child care providers to navigate local zoning, building code, and permitting processes.

Child care facilities are addressed in multiple sections of both the residential building code and commercial building code, and navigating through the details requires an advanced understanding of the building code process. In addition, state and local land use codes identify limitations and in some cases restrictions on the placement of child care facilities in our communities. As an architect with more than 30 years' experience practicing in Oregon, I have the understanding to navigate the various requirements for my clients. However, child care providers interested in creating or expanding a facility need to determine if a project is feasible before they commit to the expenses of hiring an architect or land use planner. HB 3496 directs DLCD to create model code, and best practice guides for use by local jurisdictions to assist in this process. Many local jurisdictions offer free "counter visits" to answer questions to the public about navigating codes and requirements, however many technicians working at the counters aren't versed in the nuances of code and requirements for child care facilities. The best practice guides prepared by DLCD will be a valuable resource for child care providers and help to reduce the regulatory barrier to increased child care facilities.

Child care providers often go through zoning, building code, and permitting processes only once or twice in the course of their career. Too often, this process is time consuming and financially devastating. But there are cities and counties in Oregon and across the nation taking proactive steps to make their codes and processes easier for child care providers. **We urge you to support HB 3496 so accessible zoning and permitting processes for child care are the norm, not the exception.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Curt Wilson, AIA

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