

Early Childhood Facilities are Essential Infrastructure

House Bill 3005

PROBLEM: Oregon is facing a child care crisis. Childcare is the work that enables all other work, and this essential infrastructure is important to solve our workforce crises and to allow families to become financially resilient.

Every county in Oregon is a child care desert for infants and toddlers, and the situation is not much better for families with older children. Solving this crisis is going to take strategies to serve more children & families, build the workforce, and expand facilities.

- ❖ **Child care and preschool facilities are essential community infrastructure.** Our entire economy is dependent on equitable access to child care and preschool. Like roads and bridges, affordable, quality early learning and care is necessary infrastructure.
 - **Parents** need care that provides a peace of mind that their children are learning and loved.
 - **Employers** need their employees to have access to reliable, affordable care so they can work.
 - **Children** need care that supports their well-being and the development of their brains and bodies to build a strong foundation that supports life-long outcomes.
- ❖ **Oregon lacks a plan to grow facilities.** This is why a [team of providers and partners](#) met for 6 months to identify solutions. House Bill 3005 is a priority recommendation from that work.
- ❖ **Lack of access to financing is a key barrier to expanding facilities.** Tight budgets and inadequate pay in the early childhood sector make securing down payments, financing tenant improvements, and accessing loans a barrier to expansion.
- ❖ **These barriers impact all providers, and they have the greatest impact on providers often shut out from access to financing** - including providers who are low-income, people of color, speak languages other than English, and rural communities.

SOLUTION: Create and invest in the Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund

HB 3005 will:

- Establish the Early Childhood Infrastructure Fund at Oregon Housing & Community Services, to build on funding for co-location of affordable housing & child care.
- Provide technical assistance and support for providers from a [Community Development Financial Institution](#) (CDFI) experienced at working with child care, who will manage the fund. CDFIs are created to strengthen communities that have lacked access to financing
- Make funds available for all types of care in Oregon's mixed delivery system, including home-based, center-based, school/ESD-based, community organization-based, Head Start/OPK, and co-located programs, to serve children and families well.
- Provide funding for every step of the process: securing sites, design, repair, renovations, construction, climate and energy efficiency improvements.
- Prioritize projects that meet Oregon's greatest early learning & care needs.

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