

2025 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Every Oregon family deserves access to high-quality, affordable and culturally relevant child care. Every child care provider should be paid a wage that reflects the essential work they do. But it's not just about fairness — it just makes economic sense. Child care is the workforce behind the workforce, enabling parents to participate in the labor market and driving local economies. We urge lawmakers to act **now** to preserve the progress made so far and secure a brighter future for Oregon's families, businesses and economy.

THE PROBLEM AT LARGE

Each and every day, the child care crisis continues to make thousands of Oregonians' lives unnecessarily difficult. Parents and caregivers are unable to afford the child care necessary to simply go to work let alone advance their careers with training and education, spend time with friends and family, or access healthcare, for example.

The current child care system in Oregon is facing significant challenges, including:

1. **Inadequate funding:** The state only funds ERDC to serve about 12% of eligible families, leaving thousands of families on a waitlist.
2. **Inequitable access:** Families, especially in rural areas, face barriers in finding childcare due to inadequate referral services (2-1-1). 25% of families approved for ERDC are not connected to a child care provider.
3. **Workforce crisis:** The child care industry has the largest labor gap of 12.6%, with low wages (\$35,000/year) and lack of benefits (health insurance, paid sick leave) making it difficult to attract and retain workers.



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THE SOLUTIONS

ACCESSIBILITY & AFFORDABILITY

FUNDING FOR EMPLOYMENT-RELATED DAY CARE PROGRAM

Invest an additional \$500M to the Department of Early Learning and Care (DELIC) to serve the 8,700 families on the waitlist for the next biennium.

HB 2593 — ERDC ACCESS IMPACT REPORT

The ERDC program has over 16,000 families that it serves and an additional 8,700 students and working parents on the waitlist, unable to access the subsidy. This bill would require DELIC to report current enrollment in ERDC and how it has changed since the waitlist was implemented, and share what strategies are being implemented or necessary to ensure enrollment meets a minimum of 50% working families and 20% student parents.

HB 2452 — CHILD CARE RESOURCE & REFERRAL ENHANCED REFERRALS

Of the 16,000 families with ERDC vouchers, more than 4,000 are still unable to find a childcare provider. To find a provider, families are referred to 2-1-1 or FindChildCareOregon.org. Return the enhanced referrals system to Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies so that they can help both families and providers in their communities. This would strengthen our overall childcare referral system statewide by providing more community-based assistance for families and providers.

WORKFORCE BEHIND THE WORKFORCE

HB 2450 — CHILD CARE IMPACT STATEMENT

With a need for economic growth and jobs in the state, we are anticipating many bills dedicated to job growth to be introduced in this upcoming session. However, many of these bills fail to address the needs of parent workers who may already have barriers to returning to the workforce, such as childcare. This bill would require that a child care impact statement be prepared to identify the child care needs to consider when expanding the work force.

THE CHILD CARE WORKFORCE

HB 3008 — CHILD CARE WORKFORCE PACKAGE

We must continue to invest in Oregon's child care industry. A continuation of a previous bill passed, this bill would ensure dollars are designated to fund recruitment and retention payments to child care providers working in Oregon through the Oregon Center for Career Development in Childhood Care and Education; to provide health care benefits to child care providers; and to fund child care workforce training programs. This bill would also continue one-time \$500 annual payments to child care providers as a recognition bonus.



LIFTING UP THE VOICES OF MOTHERS & CARE PROVIDERS

Join us for Family Forward's Lobby Day
on Tuesday, March 25, 2025

