

Advocating for Child Care: Oregon's Progress

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Oregon has made great progress in improving the child care system by looking forward to the future. A future that prioritizes the needs of the BIPOC providers, families, and kids to ensure that Oregon families have access to high-quality, affordable, and culturally relevant child care. A future where every child care provider is paid a wage that reflects the essential work they do.

To make this future a reality, leaders from Oregon Unions and Advocacy groups have focused on Early Care and Education as a foundation of change.

[The Services Employees International Union \(SEIU 503\)](#) has contributed to the foundation of change by constructing a new contract that increases Early Educator online and in-person training stipends from \$12 per hour to \$15 per hour, doubled the travel stipend amounts from \$4 to \$8 and diversifying the training and resources given to families and early educators in other languages.

[American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees \(AFSCME\)](#) is a leader in the foundation of change by fully supporting the Federal Build Back Better bill. This bill will strengthen the Early Care and Education filed by extending the Child Tax Credit helping cut the number of families experiencing poverty. This bill offers an investment in Americans' education beyond high school more affordable with a historic investment in Pell grants. Most recently AFSCME has worked to pass [House Bill 4005](#) providing a historic \$100 million child care package making it more economically feasible for family child care providers to get paid 90% of the market rate cost of child care for families who receive the Employment Related Daycare Subsidy.

[Family Forward](#) has impacted the foundation of change by the [Child Care for Oregon](#) coalition working to pass [House Bill 3073](#) impacting families and early educators. This bill supports the streamlining governance by housing Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) with other early learning and child care programs. Ensuring that families who are reviving the ERDC subsidy will have a copay that is no more than 7% of a family's income. Providing financial stability for early educators by making ERDC payments based on enrollment instead of attendance, protecting the enrollment for at least one year, and setting rates for educators based on the true cost of care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented our state and county with the realization that child care is essential. Early Childhood Educators keep our economy running smoothly allowing parents to go to work and know that their child is in a healthy, safe, and quality environment. These three groups are just a few of the organizations leading the way for the foundation of change.

By reading, learning, volunteering, and becoming a member of advocacy groups you have the power to be a leader of The Foundation of Change by sitting at the table with decision-makers in the child care system. Becoming an advocate for Early Care and Education you are creating the change you want to see in the world and showing your children in your life that they can be a leader in the world and support change.