



ADVOCACY AGENDA: MESSAGING AND TALKING POINTS

This toolkit includes resources to advocate for Family Forward 2025 Advocacy Agenda. Please reach out to Marchel at marchel@familyforward.org with any questions.

Instructions: Please use this messaging and talking points to draft social media, emails, testimony and any other advocacy in support of our agenda!

GENERAL: About the Child Care Agenda

Child care is the workforce behind the workforce. (Full agenda)

- Every Oregon family deserves access to high-quality, affordable and culturally relevant child care.
- The Oregon Legislature has historically underfunded the child care systems, leading to unaffordable care for families and a lack of support for providers facing industry-wide low wages.
- Every child care provider should be paid a wage that reflects the essential work they do. And it shouldn't fall on parents or providers to foot the bill for an inadequate system.
- When we invest in child care, caregivers and parents can participate in the labor market, drive local economies and provide for their families and loved ones.
- As we all struggle with the high cost of housing, food and healthcare, the price of child care continues to rise while child care providers face industry-wide low wages.
- We must address the high cost of child care workers and state-wide lack of fair wages for providers.
- Child care is the workforce behind our workforce, this essential industry must be invested in for Oregon to thrive

PRIORITY 1: The Workforce behind Oregon's Workforce.

Invest in a Strong Child Care System (ERDC Funding)

The Oregon Legislature must fulfill their promise to working families and students seeking affordable child care by investing \$500M to the state child care subsidy program, Employee Related Day Care (ERDC).

- The ERDC program is a lifeline for more than 16,000 families—it keeps parents working or continuing their education and ensures kids receive the quality care they deserve.
- Currently, only about 12% of eligible families are served by this vital child care subsidy program.
- The Legislature has made a commitment to Oregon families in need of affordable child care
- Without more funding, thousands of families eligible for assistance will be denied access to these critical subsidies.
- The United States invests fewer public dollars in early childhood education and child care relative to gross domestic product (GDP) than almost all other developed countries — ranking 35th out of 37 countries.

PRIORITY 2: Expand Accessible and Affordable Care

Reduce the waitlist for affordable care (HB 2593)

The Oregon Legislature must require the state to report ERDC enrollment changes since the waitlist began, and implement strategies to ensure more working families and student-parents are enrolled (HB 2593).

- Parents and caregivers rely on ERDC to provide quality child care so that they can go to work and school to provide for their families.
- The Oregon Legislature has historically underfunded ERDC, leading to a waitlist that began in 2023. Currently, about 9,700 families are on the waitlist.
- This report would include current enrollment in ERDC and how it has changed since the waitlist was implemented, as well as strategies being implemented or needed to ensure enrollment meets a minimum of 50% working families and 20% student parents.



- ERDC reporting is essential to providing accountability that will reduce the waitlist for affordable care.
- Small businesses report that they've experienced lower productivity (51%), been unable to operate longer hours (44%), lost revenue or earnings (31%), and had to hire temporary workers (28%) when their employees are facing childcare issues.

Strengthen Oregon's Child Care Referral System (HB2452)

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PRIORITY 3: Make Child Care Providers a Priority

Support for Child Care Workers and Families! (HB3008)

The Oregon Legislature must designate funds for apprenticeship programs for Oregon's child care providers, and continue the \$500 annual recognition bonuses so more child care workers can afford to stay in and enter the profession — and more families can get access to care (HB3008).

- Oregon has a severe child care shortage, largely because low wages and a lack of benefits make it difficult for providers to make ends meet.



- Child care providers make half of the Oregon median income, at an average of just \$35,000/year, and often without benefits like health insurance and paid sick leave.
- Oregon needs 12.6% more child care providers to meet the needs of families—more than any other industry in the state.
- Child care business owners want to retain qualified staff, but need support from the Oregon Legislature to be able to afford the benefits and support providers deserve.
- Child Care is the workforce behind Oregon's workforce, and we must support them.