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2001 PULITZER PRIZE WINNER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Governor issues 'call to action' for Oregon children

The state will form public and private partnerships to develop policies to help youth poorly served in a bad economy

BY BILL GRAVES
THE OREGONIAN

Gov. Ted Kulongoski called on Oregonians Thursday to help him make sure every Oregon child is safe and healthy, enters school ready to learn and graduates from high school prepared for college or work.

"This is about a call to action," the governor said, outlining his "Children's Charter for Ore-

gon" during a luncheon in downtown Portland to benefit an advocacy group, Children First for Oregon.

The governor said the state is limited by its tight budget, so it must tap the collective resources of individuals, the private sector and government as it repairs a frayed social compact to care for the state's children.

He wants to make sure, he said, "that no child in Oregon is left with his or her face pressed up against the windowpane of opportunity and success."

That means setting goals, working hard, tapping known advocates for kids and enlisting "businesses, organizations and people with no

previous record of standing up for children," Kulongoski said.

Every eligible child should be enrolled in Head Start, he said, and all Oregon children should be in quality child care — a huge leap for a state that has only 41 percent of 3- and 4-year-olds in preschool or child care, according to the 2000 Census.

He said he aims to leverage federal money to expand health services for children, including more health centers in public schools. He also vowed to stamp out methamphetamine production in Oregon "by bringing to the table" everyone who has a role to play, including

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KULONGOSKI
Will seek federal help for health care