

# Governor Sets the Future of Oregon's Children

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Governor Ted Kulongoski announced his "Children's Charter for Oregon" at a recent lunch benefit for Children First for Oregon, with an audience of more than 500 Oregonians from nearly every Oregon county.

"To give Oregon children the new and brighter day they need to ensure our state's future success, today I'm asking you—and all the citizens of Oregon—to sign onto a Children's Charter for Oregon," said the Governor.

"This is *not* about creating a laundry list of new programs. Our budget simply doesn't allow for that right now. This is about a call to action. I want the public and private sectors to resolve to work together to make sure that no child in Oregon is left with his or her face pressed up against the winduppane of opportunity and success."

The three principles of the Governor's charter are as follows:

- Every child in Oregon is safe, healthy and has adequate food and shelter.
- Every younger child in Oregon is ready to enter school.
- Every older child in Oregon graduates from high school and is ready to join the workforce or go on to college.

In his speech, the Governor outlined strategies to achieve each of the three principles, including: building the economy and creating new family-wage jobs; convening a coalition of partners to address the methamphetamine problem in Oregon; increasing access for children and youth to basic health care services through CHIP, the Family Health Insurance Assistance Program and community-based health centers; increasing access to quality childcare; and promoting prevention and early intervention programs.

The Governor also announced that Oregon has been selected as one of three

states to participate in a demonstration project with the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices.

Participation will allow Oregon - including both public and private supporters - to come up with data-driven policies that enhance the capacity, stability and performance of Oregon's health care safety net for children and families.

In addition, the Governor also announced that he has asked representatives from the Commission on Children and Families, the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Oregon Youth Authority and the Criminal Justice Commission to make recommendations about to him about shoring up Oregon's prevention system and communicating its value.

"Prevention is a wise investment in our children—it saves dollars in the long run by keeping problems from spiraling out of control," said the Governor. "Prevention means everything from teaching new parents how to provide their children with the kind of care that will ensure healthy development—to encouraging young people to stay in school so they can support themselves and their future family with a good education and a decent job."

Children First for Oregon, the state's leading policy voice for children and families, applauded the Governor's focus on children - especially his efforts to improve the financial stability of their families, expand access to health insurance, help more parents find affordable child care and ensure more children live in a safe environment.

"Our 2003 Report Card on the Status of Children sounded an alarm that every Oregonian needs to hear and respond to," said Marie Hoeven, Children First's executive director. "Oregon can and will do better than a 'C-' for child well being."

We're thrilled to join Governor Kulongoski, Senator Westlund, Albertsons and all our partners in providing we can make this state better for children and their families."

Albertsons joined Governor Kulongoski and Children First in the lunch effort to shine a light on child well being and assist in the call for all Oregonians to get involved in the lives of children and families.

"We fundamentally believe we're a part of each Oregon neighborhood and community we serve," said Mike Clawson, Albertsons Northwest Division President. "We strive to be true community partners, and share Oregon's vision for healthy and happy children and families, which is why we've taken a lead role in the fight against hunger, and continually invest in child development and health services statewide."

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