

Legislative concepts

1. Support EDHI POP or request more money for EDHI. More money will allow EDHI to increase cultural competency, better outreach, more staff,
2. Maintain increased state funding that resulted in sub grants to Regional Programs to provide audiology services. After receiving a \$4m increase above the \$15m requested EI/ECSE budget, ODE awarded sub grants to Regional Programs to support purchasing and providing audiology services and equipment for regionally eligible children 0-21. Districts are still responsible for paying for any evaluation used to determine eligibility, but the sub grants will help equip the regional programs with what they need to support audiology services in their area.
3. Update hearing aid insurance mandate. Current statute requires private insurance to cover hearing aids for all children under 19 and students under 26. Sets \$1000 annual minimum coverage amount (set in 2010), which increases annually according to US Consumer Price Index. Updates to the current statute could include coverage of FM systems, cochlear implants, BAHA, etc and update dollar amount to reflect current costs.
4. Add audiologist to Health Care Loan Forgiveness Program. Office of Rural health offers a loan repayment program for a commitment of 5 years in designated areas. Update the program to include audiology or pediatric audiology.
5. Insurance mandate for hearing testing. Add statutory requirement for private insurers in Oregon to cover ongoing hearing tests, testing regardless of having tubes, and testing costs even if hearing is found to be normal.
6. Expand role of regional programs. Change statute that doesn't allow regional programs to diagnose hearing loss or determine eligibility for EI/ECSE, increase ability for bigger regionals help smaller regionals and school of deaf fit aids and bill Medicaid/private insurers,
7. Ensure Early Learning Council provides more focus on children with hearing loss. Possibly update kindergarten readiness assessment and include a measure for the quality program certification for child care providers.