



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New program is an innovative effort to wholly support early educators and children ages 0-5.

ROSEBURG, Oregon. Cobb Children's Learning Center, a 501(c)(3) organization committed to ensuring equitable access to high-quality care and early education today launched a program that will provide free college tuition for all full-time employees at the company's early education center- Cobb Childcare & Preschool. The program will allow employees to earn an undergraduate early childhood education certificate, associate and/or bachelor's degree in early childhood education for free. Cobb employees taking advantage of the program will not have to pay for any expenses out of pocket, including tuition, fees, and books. Unlike a traditional tuition reimbursement program, employees will not need to find a way to pay for expenses upfront, thus eliminating the greatest barrier to post-secondary education.



“We are committed to the belief that every person of every age deserves access to education,” said Cobb Children's Learning Center Executive Director Jessica Gaul. “We take that commitment seriously, and believe it extends to the passionate lifelong learners who care for and educate the small citizens we serve. Three years ago, we began improving our recruitment and retention strategy, adjusting salaries to above-market rates, embedding paid professional development, and expanding our benefits program in an effort to recruit and retain the brightest and the best. Two years ago, we began brainstorming a dream to best support motivated individuals in pursuing post-secondary education. Our dream became an achievable goal, and we are so pleased to invest in educators at every level to grow their education careers and ultimately improve early education and long-term outcomes for our community through our work with Douglas County children.”

All new employees join the [Grow Your Own Teacher](#) program as early as their first day of work as part of the comprehensive onboarding process. The program is designed to recruit, develop, and retain teachers who are already in the community, best reflecting the diversity of the children in care. “We recognize our emergent and child-centered approach is a unique offering in Southern Oregon,” says Gaul. “The Grow Your Own Teacher program draws from people who have a passion for a child-centered approach but are not yet familiar or perhaps not yet comfortable with putting all the pieces together. Through thoughtful support and mentorship, employees who participate in the Grow Your Own Teacher program develop a comprehensive understanding of our method while forging meaningful and lasting relationships with our existing teaching teams.”

Employees in Cobb's Grow Your Own Teacher program can enroll in an early childhood program to earn their undergraduate certificate, associate's degree, or bachelor's degree at no cost to them. In return for the investment, Cobb Children's Learning Center asks staff to commit to employment with the organization for a defined period of time, depending on the degree. “I firmly believe the best investment an organization can make is to invest in its people,” said Executive Director Gaul. “I am proud of the work happening within our walls to honor and respect children as they are, and am incredibly pleased to be able to further support our dedicated staff in implementing our research-backed approach.”

About Cobb Children's Learning Center

Cobb Children's Learning Center is a not-for-profit 501(c)3 organization, committed to ensuring equitable access to high-quality childcare and early education for Douglas County families through Cobb Childcare and Preschool. Cobb serves approximately 110 children annually through an emergent, child-centered approach to early education. With more than 25 years of experience, they are one of the only emergent centers in Southern Oregon. Their website is www.CobbSchool.org