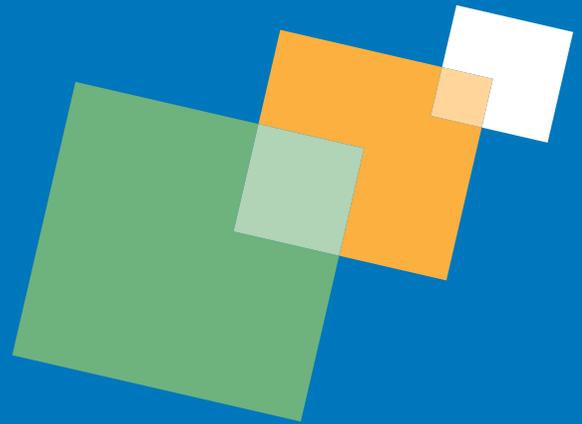


# KIDS MATTER:

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN WASHINGTON STATE



A framework for building an early childhood system in Washington State

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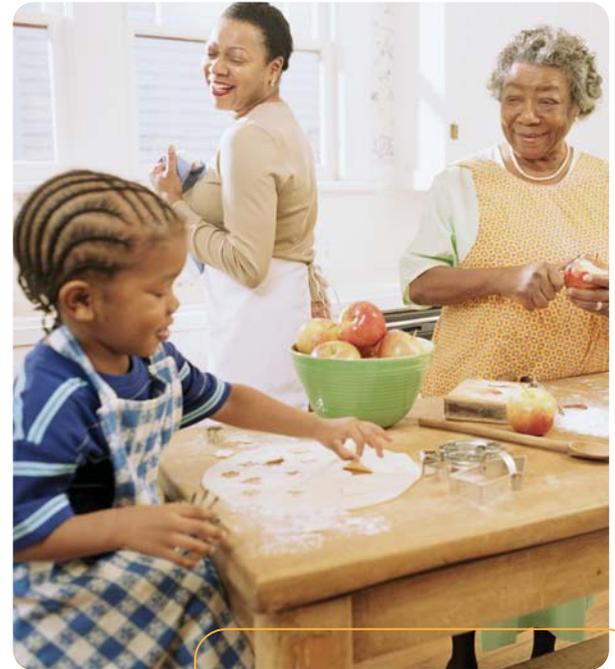
FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Lorrie Grevstad, Department Of Health, Washington State, [lorrie.grevstad@doh.wa.gov](mailto:lorrie.grevstad@doh.wa.gov)  
Sangree Froelicher, Head Start-State Collaboration Office, The Build Initiative, [froelsm@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:froelsm@dshs.wa.gov)  
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Kids Matter is a collaborative and comprehensive strategic framework for building the early childhood system in Washington State in order to improve outcomes for children. The current reality is that services, policies and systems that serve young children are inadequate to meet the needs of children and families. This plan offers a framework that supports the efforts of local and state stakeholders to coordinate, collaborate and integrate efforts that will lead to children being healthy and ready for school. This plan identifies specific achievable outcomes within four goal areas: **access to health insurance and medical homes; mental health and social-emotional development; early care and education/child care and parenting information and support.** Cutting across and integrated within each of these is a family support approach to achieving outcomes within the four goal areas.<sup>❶</sup>

This plan was developed with the participation of early childhood stakeholders at the community, local and state levels. Three system-building initiatives, the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems grant in the Department of Health, the Build Initiative and the Head Start-State Collaboration Office, are committed to supporting and guiding its implementation, so that it becomes a living, active plan in Washington State. The Plan belongs to all interested stakeholder groups and organizations who believe that working collaboratively toward common goals and outcomes will lead to greater success than is possible by working alone. It is intended to guide the actions of public and private stakeholders at the community, local and state levels.



Kids Matter belongs to all interested stakeholder groups and organizations who believe that working collaboratively toward common goals and outcomes will lead to greater success than is possible by working alone.

<sup>❶</sup> Rather than a specific program or service, Family Support describes an overall approach to strengthening and empowering families and communities to foster the optimal development of all family members. Ideally, Family Support principles and approaches would guide every aspect of service provision and decision-making in an early childhood system. Therefore, aspects of Family Support appear as resources such as the guiding principals, communications with parents and parent leadership, in strategies like those that increase practitioner's family support skills or increase families' access to needed resources as well as in outcomes that demonstrate the belief that a system which supports and strengthens the knowledge, skills and resources of families is a system that promotes the optimal development of young children.



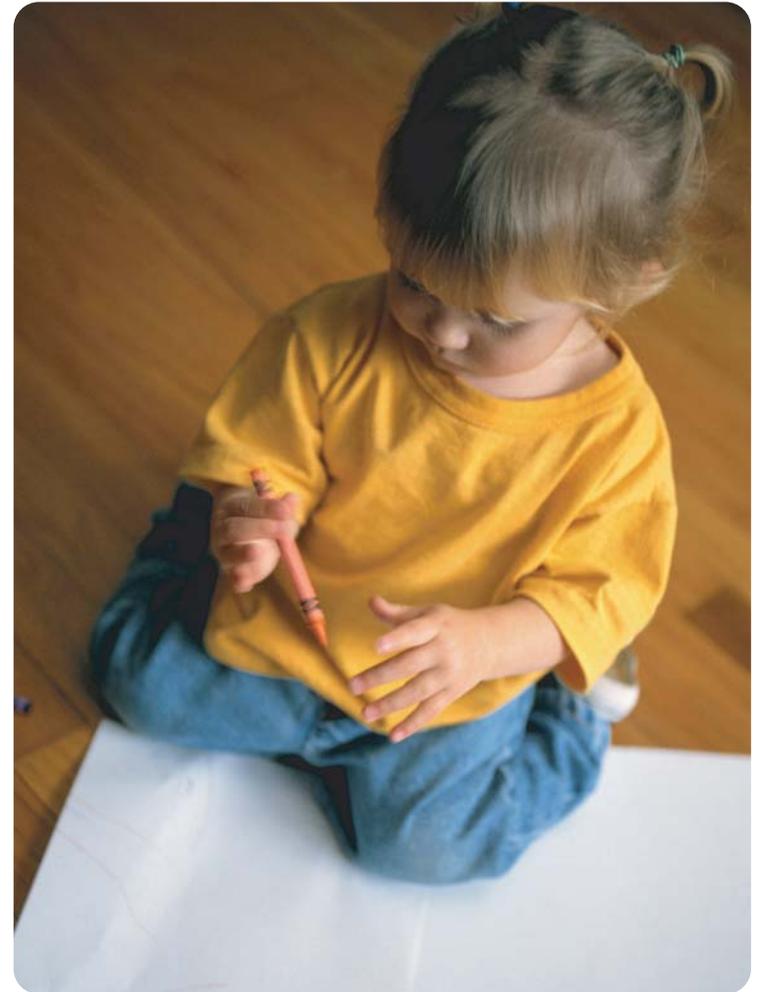
### HALLMARKS OF THE PLAN

- Approaches early childhood systems as a collaborative effort
- Serves as an over-arching bridge for a comprehensive and integrated framework
- Defines common goals and outcomes
- Outlines specific strategies and partners
- Focuses on accountability and evaluation of progress

### INTENTIONS OF THE PLAN

Rather than being a detailed list of all work on behalf of young children, The Plan assumes that state and local agencies and communities are pursuing their specific missions and priority goals. The plan builds upon existing and emerging efforts and identifies opportunities for working together in more strategic, integrated and collaborative ways toward commonly-agreed upon outcomes.

*By offering a common vision, opportunity for integration, defined high priority common outcomes and a way to assess progress, partners in early childhood efforts can collectively change the health, well-being and school readiness of children in Washington State.*





## MISSION

The Kids Matter Plan focuses efforts to create sustainable, integrated and accessible early childhood pathways so that parents, caregivers and communities throughout Washington State have the information, support and services they need to help young children achieve their greatest potential.

## KIDS MATTER WAS DEVELOPED UNDER THE FOLLOWING TENETS:

- Joint systems building efforts built upon existing work
- Cross-system state agency participation
- Participatory community input from a broad constituency to prioritize and intentionally rank outcomes

SO THAT as a state we could develop a framework (i.e., Kids Matter) with prioritized outcomes for systems serving children and families.

## EARLY LEARNING OCCURS IN THE CONTEXT OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY, ENCOMPASSING:

- Physical Health and Access to Comprehensive Health Care
- Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health
- Early Care and Education/ Child Care
- Parenting Information and Support



A commitment to Family Support principles and approaches cuts across each of these contexts.

## SYSTEM STRENGTHS AND GAPS

*Strengths in the system include:*

- Progress in increasing access to health care and medical homes for children and families
- Powerful resources and promising local initiatives addressing mental health and social/emotional development
- Washington Early Learning and Development Benchmarks
- The movement toward linkages between early childhood education and K-12
- The Early Learning Council
- Numerous local agendas around school readiness
- Commitment to the concepts of Family Support and programs devoted to or significantly incorporating Family Support

*Four overarching system gaps have been identified in Washington State:*

- Fragmentation—multiple, separate systems
- Funding gaps
- Challenges to focused policy guidance and decisionmaking
- Lack of public understanding of the importance of early childhood and early childhood services

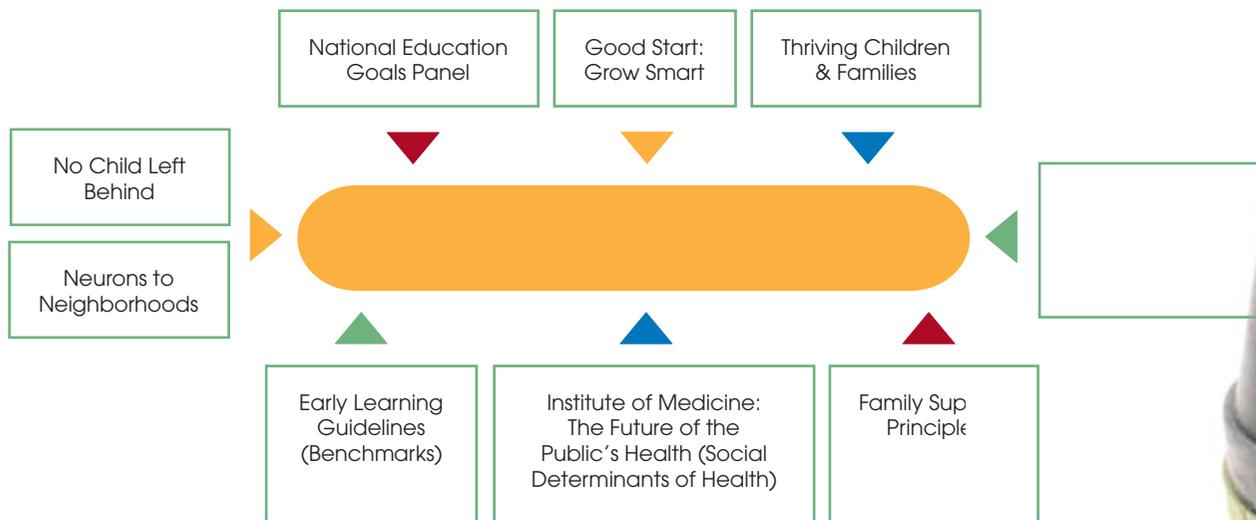
The Kids Matter Plan is a tool to bring together people and organizations with common goals; to reduce fragmentation of systems and services; to provide clear, prioritized policy guidance to decision-makers and to contribute to programs, services, schools and communities so that:

## GOAL:

**CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY AND READY FOR SCHOOL**



## KIDS MATTER: PILLARS OF THE PLAN



While the Kids Matter framework is stakeholder driven, it is also grounded in national level research-based information which guides its Theory of Change. The Plan practices in early childhood systems building, service and program coordination and specific programmatic areas and practices using them to guide the implementation of The Plan. Kids Matter refers to this work as the “**Pillars of the Plan.**” This theory serves as the backdrop for the systems building, collaboration and integration efforts.

# KIDS MATTER FRAMEWORK

## INFRASTRUCTURE

- Research and Resources
- Infrastructure In WA State
- Projects and Initiatives

## COMMUNICATION

- Children's Web Hub
- CHILD Profile
- Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies
- Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies and 211 Information and Referral Lines

## FUNDING

- Leverage public/private resources to move the early childhood agenda

## KEY RESOURCES

### STRATEGIES

#### ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE & MEDICAL HOMES

- Increase awareness among all who care for young children about the importance of comprehensive health care
- Enroll more eligible children in public health insurance programs (Medicaid, SCHIP, Basic Health, SSI)
- Facilitate access to a Medical Home for all children (including medical, dental, mental health, vision & hearing services)
- Make developmental assessment & referral to Early Intervention (EI) accessible

#### SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL & MENTAL HEALTH

- Ensure that communications with all who work with young children emphasize the importance of social, emotional & mental health
- Promote existing programs' awareness & implementation of models of services & supports for young families that are effective, culturally competent & community-based
- Promote existing programs' awareness & implementation of practices that provide opportunities for social connectedness for families
- Promote caregivers' knowledge of social, emotional & mental health of young children
- Promote collaboration among policy-makers, providers & other stakeholders

#### EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION/CHILD CARE

- Use Washington State Early Learning & Development Benchmarks as a tool to enhance the quality of early care & learning
- Improve the ability to evaluate & reward high-quality programs through development of Quality Rating System (QRS) & Tiered Reimbursement
- Promote children's health in early care & education programs (ongoing statewide collaborative effort: Healthy Child Care Washington-HCCW)
- Support high quality professional development services for caregivers
- Develop capacity within the early care & education systems to engage in family support
- Expand access to high quality preschool experiences

#### PARENTING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

- Provide information to parents & facilitate connection to needed services & supports
- Provide professional development programs, services & supports for professionals providing information & support to parents
- Strengthen & sustain the Washington Parenting Education Network (WAPEN)

### SYSTEM CHANGES

- Increased number and percentage of children who have medical insurance

- Increased availability of appropriate and coordinated mental health services for children

- Increased number and percentage of child care & preschool programs that are quality rated
- Increased wages for quality child care providers
- Increased systems' recognition of families' role as the primary nurturer of their children
- The public sees early childhood education, health & school readiness as a major contributor of academic success and economic growth
- Improved ability of families to obtain quality child care & preschool programs to meet families' needs
- Increased availability of community resources & support networks for families and caregivers

- Increased availability of parenting education resources & services

### PARENT & CARE-GIVER CHANGES

- Increased understanding of the importance of comprehensive health care (including medical, dental, mental health, vision & hearing)
- Increased ability to recognize an emerging issue with their child's health or development and connect with appropriate services

- Improved understanding and practice of nurturing behaviors to promote children's optimal social-emotional development and mental health

- Increased understanding of what children need for optimal health & development (physical, social-emotional, cognitive & language)

- Increased stress-reduction skills
- Increased knowledge & skills to support children's health & development

### CHILD CHANGES

- Increased number and percentage of children that receive recommended preventive care (e.g., well-child, immunizations)
- Increased number and percentage of children who have access to comprehensive health care (including medical, dental, mental health, vision & hearing)

- Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten with social-emotional skills

- Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten healthy & ready for school, including: 1) physical well-being, health & motor development; 2) social & emotional development; 3) approaches toward learning; 4) cognition & general knowledge; and 5) language, communication & literacy

- Increased number and percentage of children who live in safe, stable & supportive families

## GOAL

**CHILDREN ARE HEALTHY AND READY FOR SCHOOL**



Family Support approach, strategy, or outcome

# KIDS MATTER: IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN WASHINGTON STATE

## ACCESS TO HEALTH INSURANCE AND MEDICAL HOMES



**GOAL**  
Children are healthy and ready for school

## OUTCOMES

### PARENT & CAREGIVER

- Increased understanding of the importance of comprehensive health care (including medical, dental, mental health, vision & hearing)
- Increased ability to recognize an emerging issue with their child's health or development & connect with appropriate services



### SYSTEM

- Increased number and percentage of children who have medical insurance

### CHILD CHANGES

- Increased number & percentage of children who receive recommended preventive care (e.g., well-child, immunizations)
- Increased number and percentage of children who have access to comprehensive health care (including medical, dental, mental health, vision & hearing)

## STRATEGIES

- **Increase awareness** among all who care for young children about the importance of comprehensive health care

- **Enroll more eligible children** in public health insurance programs (Medicaid, SCHIP Basic Health, SSI)

- **Facilitate access to a Medical Home** for all children (including medical, dental, mental health, vision & hearing services)

- **Make developmental assessment and referral to Early Intervention (EI)** accessible

- **Develop, promote and implement policies** that will advance Kids Matter Strategies and Outcomes

## RESOURCES

### SYSTEM BUILDING INITIATIVES

- ECCS Grant – Dept of Health
- BUILD Initiative
- Head Start – State Collaboration Office

### PARTICIPATING SYSTEMS

- State & Local Government Partners
- Coalitions & Associations
- Foundations and other private funders

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Research and Resources
- Governance in Washington State
- Projects and Initiatives

### COMMUNICATION

- Children's Web Hub
- Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies and 211 Information and Referral Lines
- CHILD Profile
- Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

### PARENT LEADERSHIP

- Parent leadership is an essential part of high quality services and systems. The goal is to promote this resource for system and/or specific strategies.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Be child-focused and family-centered
- Recognize that families are children's primary teachers
- Interact with consideration and respect
- Be flexible & responsive
- Build on strengths
- Provide high quality services
- Use evaluation to inform decisions

### FUNDING

- Leverage public/private resources to move access to health insurance and medical homes forward

Family Support approach, strategy, or outcome

# KIDS MATTER: IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN WASHINGTON STATE

## SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, AND MENTAL HEALTH



**GOAL**  
Children are healthy and ready for school

## OUTCOMES

### PARENT & CAREGIVER

- Improved understanding and practice of nurturing behaviors to promote children's optimal social-emotional development and mental health



### SYSTEM

- Increased availability or appropriate and coordinated mental health services for children



### CHILD CHANGES

- Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten with social/emotional skills

## STRATEGIES



- Ensure that communications with all who work with young children **emphasize the importance** of social, emotional and mental health



- Promote existing programs' awareness and implementation of models of services and supports for young families that are effective, **culturally competent and community-based**



- Promote existing programs' awareness and implementation of practices that **provide opportunities for social connectedness** for families



- Promote caregivers' knowledge** of social, emotional and mental health of young children

- Promote collaboration** among policymakers, providers and other stakeholders

- Develop, promote and implement policies** that will advance Kids Matter strategies and outcomes

## RESOURCES

### SYSTEM BUILDING INITIATIVES

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- Be flexible & responsive
- Build on strengths
- Provide high quality services
- Use evaluation to inform decisions



### FUNDING

- Leverage public/ private resources to promote positive social, emotional and mental health



Family Support approach, strategy, or outcome

# KIDS MATTER: IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN WASHINGTON STATE

## EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION/CHILD CARE



**GOAL**  
Children are healthy and ready for school

## OUTCOMES

### PARENT & CAREGIVER

- Increased understanding of what children need for optimal health and development (physical, social-emotional, cognitive & language)

### SYSTEM

- Increased number & percentage of child care & preschool programs that are quality rated
- Increased wages for quality child care providers
- Increased systems' recognition of families' role as the primary nurturers of their children
- The public sees early childhood education, health & school readiness as a major contributor of academic success and economic growth
- Improved ability of families to obtain quality child care & preschool programs that meet families' needs
- Increased availability of community resources & support networks for families and caregivers

### CHILD CHANGES

- Increased number and percentage of children entering kindergarten healthy & ready for school, including: 1) physical wellbeing, health & motor development, 2) social & emotional development, 3) approaches toward learning, 4) cognition & general knowledge, & 5) language, communication & literacy

## STRATEGIES

- Use **Washington State Early Learning and Development Benchmarks** as a tool to enhance the quality of child care and early learning

- Improve the ability to evaluate and reward high-quality programs through development of Quality Rating System (QRS) and Tiered Reimbursement

- Promote children's health in early care and education programs (Ongoing statewide collaborative effort: Healthy Child Care Washington - HCCW)

- Support high quality professional development services and opportunities for caregivers

- Develop capacity within the early care and education systems to engage in family support

- Expand access to high quality preschool experiences

- Develop, promote and implement policies that will advance Kids Matter strategies and outcomes

## RESOURCES

### SYSTEM BUILDING INITIATIVES

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- Build on strengths
- Provide high quality services
- Use evaluation to inform decisions

### FUNDING

- Leverage public/private resources to move Early Care and Education forward
- New Governor's Early Learning Council will make funding recommendations
- Legislature approved funding quality-rated and tiered reimbursement pilots, with statewide options

Family Support approach, strategy, or outcome

# KIDS MATTER: IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN WASHINGTON STATE

## PARENTING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT



**GOAL**  
Children are healthy and ready for school

### OUTCOMES

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <p><b>PARENT &amp; CAREGIVER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased stress-reduction skills</li> <li>■ Increased knowledge &amp; skills to support children's health &amp; development</li> </ul> | <p><b>SYSTEM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased availability of parenting education resources &amp; services</li> </ul> | <p><b>CHILD CHANGES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increased number and percentage of children who live in safe, stable &amp; supportive families</li> </ul> |
|---|---|--|

### STRATEGIES

- **Provide information to parents** and facilitate connection to needed services and supports
- **Provide professional development programs, services** and supports for professionals providing information and support to parents
- **Strengthen and sustain** the Washington Parenting Education Network (WAPEN)
- **Develop, promote and implement policies** that will advance Kids Matter strategies and outcomes

### RESOURCES

- |  |   |   |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>SYSTEM BUILDING INITIATIVES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ ECCS Grant – Dept of Health</li> <li>■ BUILD Initiative</li> <li>■ Head Start – State Collaboration Office</li> </ul> | <p><b>PARTICIPATING SYSTEMS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ State &amp; Local Government Partners</li> <li>■ Coalitions &amp; Associations</li> <li>■ Foundations and other private funders</li> </ul> | <p><b>INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Research and Resources</li> <li>■ Governance in Washington State</li> <li>■ Projects and Initiatives</li> </ul> | <p><b>COMMUNICATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Children's Web Hub</li> <li>■ Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies and 211 Information and Referral Lines</li> <li>■ CHILD Profile</li> <li>■ Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies</li> </ul> | <p><b>PARENT LEADERSHIP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Parent leadership is an essential part of high quality services and systems. The goal is to promote this resource for system and/or specific strategies.</li> </ul> | <p><b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Be child-focused and family-centered</li> <li>■ Recognize that families are children's primary teachers</li> <li>■ Interact with consideration and respect</li> <li>■ Be flexible &amp; responsive</li> <li>■ Build on strengths</li> <li>■ Provide high quality services</li> <li>■ Use evaluation to inform decisions</li> </ul> | <p><b>FUNDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Leverage public/private resources to move parenting information and support forward</li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|---|

Family Support approach, strategy, or outcome



## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

- Child Care Health Consultants (Nurses in local health jurisdictions statewide)
- Child Care Resources and Referral Network (Managers of local resource and referral networks statewide)
- Family, Friends and Neighbor Care Providers (Community-based family, friends and neighbor care providers in King County)
- Family Support Programs (Statewide network supported by Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect)
- Family Advisory Network (Statewide network of parents that guide the work of the Program of Children with Special Health Care needs)
- Head Start/ECEAP Regional Directors
- Teachers, administrators and parents participating in Summer Institutes (Institutes with statewide participation sponsored by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction)

## LOCAL INITIATIVES

- Bright Futures (Whatcom Co)
- CC-CHILD Profile Project (Grant Co)
- Circle of Security (Spokane Co)
- Getting School Ready (King Co)
- Kids Get Care (King Co)
- Northwest Early Learning (Skagit Co)
- Support for Early Learning and Families (Clark Co)

## STATE LEVEL STAKEHOLDERS (Advisory Group Members in bold)

- Center for Infant Mental Health (CIMH)
- Comprehensive Health Education Foundation (CHEF)\*
- **Department Of Health, Washington State (DOH)\***
- DOH Child and Adolescent Health (CAH)\*
- DOH Washington Integrated Service Enhancement (WISE)
- DOH Healthy Child Care Washington (HCCW)
- DOH Office of Maternal and Child Health (OMCH)\*
- **DSHS – Division of Child Care & Early Learning (DCCEL)\***
- DSHS Infant/Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP)
- DSHS – MAA, EPSDT Improvement Team (Medicaid)
- **Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program (ECEAP)**
- **Family Policy Council (FPC)**

- **Foundation for Early Learning (FEL)\***
- Governor’s Office – Early Childhood Policy\*
- **Head Start-State Collaboration Office (HS-SCO)\***
- **Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies (HMHB)**
- Institute for Language and Brain Sciences
- **Leadership Council for Quality Care and Education (LCQCE)**
- League of Education Voters (LEV)\*
- **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)\***
- Oral Health Coalition
- Statewide Action for Family Empowerment (SAFE-WA)
- Talaris Research Institute\*
- University of Washington, School of Nursing (Promoting First Relationships (PFR), NCAST)
- Washington Association for Education of Young Children (WAEYC)\*
- **Washington Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics (WCAAP)**
- **Washington Council for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (WCPCAN)\***
- Washington Early Learning and Development Benchmarks
- Washington Parenting Education Network (WAPEN)
- **Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network (CCRRN)\***
- Washington State Fathers Network (WSFN)

## FEDERAL EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVES

- Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) – Maternal Child Health Bureau
- Good Start, Grow Smart (GSGS) – Child Care Bureau, Head Start Bureau & Department of Education
- Infant/Toddler Child Care Initiative – National Zero To Three
- No Child Left Behind (NCLB) – Department of Education
- Build Initiative – Early Childhood Funders Collaborative

\*Build Initiative Partners. Other Build Partners include:

Parent Teacher Associations (PTA); Local School Districts (e.g., Central Valley in Spokane); National Council of Jewish Women – Seattle Section; Pierce County Libraries; Circle of Success (Yakima, Washington); King County Children and Family Commission; Program for Early Parent Support (PEPS) (King County); Project Lift-Off/SOAR (Seattle/King County); Community-Minded Enterprises (Spokane); The Boeing Company; Children’s Home Society (CHS); Economic Opportunity Institute (EOI); Kirlin Foundation; Social Venture Partners (SVP); Washington State Library; Wells Fargo Bank; Early Care and Education Coalition (EC2); Infant Toddler Early Intervention Program (ITEIP); Organization of Parent Education Programs (OPEP); Washington Association for Educators of Personnel in Early Childhood Programs (WAEPECP); Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP Programs

We thank the many organizations and individuals that have contributed to the Kids Matter framework. Support for the Kids Matter framework planning process was provided by:

Foundation for Early Learning

Washington Build Initiative

Washington State Department of Health/Office of Maternal Child Health  
Head Start-State Collaboration Office

Organizational Research Services (ORS) and Jill Sells, MD facilitated the development and writing of the Kids Matter framework.

[www.earlylearning.org/kidsmatter.html](http://www.earlylearning.org/kidsmatter.html)

**Kids Matter**

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