

Every Child Deserves the Opportunity to Succeed in School and Life

All children in Washington should be ready for kindergarten. Opportunity for success should not be determined by race, ethnicity, geography, ability, or family income. A great start for children promises successful schools, stronger families, and a healthier economy for all.

High-quality early care and education opportunities support children, and families and Washington state's economy.

HEALTHY CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

- » High-quality early care and education can improve educational outcomes, narrow achievement gaps, and convey long-term benefits for children in school and life. This is especially the case for children from low-income families.
- » Children who enter school with early skills are more likely than their peers to experience later academic success, attain higher levels of education, and secure employment.

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

- » Investing public dollars in early education provides a strong and well-documented Return on Investment for students, families, and communities.
- » Giving lower- and middle-income families the opportunity for financial stability and prosperity allows parents and guardians to choose the local, community-level option that works best for their family, so they can go to work, build a career, and contribute to the economy.



Washington spends **just 1.1%** of its budget on early care and education¹

Washington ranks **39th in the nation** in access to preschool²

Less than half of Washington kids are ready for kindergarten³

The impact of the school readiness gap on kids, families, and the economy is huge.

- » **Nearly half** of all Washington parents have a hard time finding quality child care; **more than a quarter** of them quit their jobs or leave school because they can't find or afford child care. Another **9%** get fired for missing work or being late due to child care issues.
- » The lack of affordable, high-quality child care impacts our economy, costing the state **\$6.2 billion** a year in opportunity cost, and employers lose **\$2 billion** due to staff turnover.

Fixing the school readiness gap

Washington's children and families deserve a high-quality early care and education opportunities that provide:

- » Families resources, information, and services including home visiting programs and early interventions services as needed to nurture their relationships and maximize their role as their child's first and most important teacher.
- » Children and families access to the affordable, high-quality child care and preschool choice that's right for them.
- » A diverse, well trained and compensated workforce to nurture development and learning.



Investing in Washington's kids and families is an investment in Washington's future.

Investing in high quality child care and preschool and other early learning means children will have the opportunity for success early in life and beyond. To realize the potential of all Washington children and families, the following investments should be made in the 2020 legislative session:



1

SUPPORT FAMILIES

- » **\$3 million** to expand access to intensive home visiting
- » Expand the number of dual language early learning programs so children can receive high-quality early learning in their home language

2

SUPPORT CHILDREN

- » Invest in Working Connections Child Care so small pay advancements don't lead to large child care bills for hardworking families
- » **\$1.4 million** to fund continuity of high-quality child care for families experiencing homelessness
- » **\$6 million** to ensure ECEAP can meet the complex needs of children and families

3

SUPPORT THE EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION WORKFORCE

- » Authorize and fund community-based pathways to attain credentials and professional development
- » Increase rates for infants and toddlers by **at least 12%**

The Early Learning Action Alliance is a [broad coalition of organizations](#) representing a diverse array of Washington nonprofits, professional associations, businesses, and industries. We are united by the belief that all children in Washington state deserve to have the opportunities and support they need in their first five years of life to be prepared for school and a bright future. [View our members](#). For more information: elaa@childrensalliance.org

