



Early Learning Action Alliance 2010 Legislative Agenda

The members of the Early Learning Action Alliance are united by the belief that all children in Washington State deserve the opportunities and support they need in their first five years of life to be prepared for school and a bright future.

Coalition Members:

American Federation of Teachers Washington
The Arc of King County
Business Partnership for Early Learning (BPEL)
Children's Alliance
Child Care Resources
Children's Home Society of WA
Denise Louie Education Center
Early Learning Public Library Partnership
Economic Opportunity Institute
First Five Fundamentals Foundation for Early Learning
Kirlin Charitable Foundation
League of Education Voters
League of Women Voters Washington
MomsRising
Nurse-Family Partnership
Olympia Early Learning Center
Parent Trust for Washington Children/Parents as Teachers State Office
School's Out Washington
SEIU, Local 925
SOAR
WA Association for the Education of Young Children (WAEYC)
WA Chapter: American Academy of Pediatrics
Washington State Association of Head Start & ECEAP
WA State Child Care Resource & Referral Network
WA State Family Child Care Association
Wellspring Family Services

◆ **Protect current state and federal investments in early learning programs, and support new state revenue – which is urgently needed to fulfill the state's goals – for high quality early learning.**

Last year we slipped back from our progress as a state in supporting the kind of high-quality early learning that provides stable support to low-income children and families and prepares children for school. Now more than ever – protection of the following investments and a commitment to new sources of state revenue are needed to sustain existing early learning investments and position WA to receive additional federal funds.

- Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP)
- Working Connections Child Care
- Evidence-based home visiting programs
- Career and Wage Ladder
- WA Child Care Resource & Referral Network
- Parent and caregiver supports
- Quality Rating & Improvement System (QRIS)

◆ **Ensure high quality early learning services from birth to five**

Children who have had the advantage of high-quality early learning enter kindergarten better prepared to succeed in school and require fewer services to help them catch up. We can help all kids have the opportunity to achieve their full potential with the following:

- **Make voluntary, universal Pre-K for 3- and 4-year olds part of our state's definition of Basic Education.** We again have the opportunity to make early learning a fundamental part of education by including voluntary universal PreK for 3- and 4-year-olds in the definition of basic education. The Pre-K model should be phased-in, starting with kids who are most at-risk, with the goal of serving all 3- and 4-year old children.
- **Ensure a continuum of early learning opportunities from birth through 3.** Children don't suddenly start learning at 3 years old, and research shows that we can have an enormous impact by prioritizing infants and toddlers deemed most at-risk. As Basic Education funding for PreK is phased-in, simultaneous funding should be committed to programs and services for infants and toddlers. These would include developmental screening, evidence-based home visiting, Family, Friend and Neighbor support, state Early Head Start, and programs designed to address the needs of special needs children.

◆ **Allow kids in child care the stability they need to thrive**

Low-income families will have a wider range of affordable early learning opportunities and children will be more likely to experience the continuity of care they need if the child care subsidy system is fixed. Extending the reauthorization period from 6 to 12 months, increasing the number of allowed absence from 5 to 10 per month, and capping child care co-pay to no more than 10% of a families gross monthly income, are all critically-needed policies that will promote stability for kids, their parents and caregivers.

The Early Learning Action Alliance is convened by the Children's Alliance.

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