



## CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

*A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families*

### **Children's Alliance Priorities For a Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF)**

The proposal to consolidate programs and services into a Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) in Washington State is a once in a generation opportunity to structure government for positive outcomes for children, youth, and families.

While there are many important aspects of this endeavor, the Children's Alliance has identified four key areas for the focus of our advocacy. We recognize there are many issues involved and we will also play a supportive role on other issues that are deeply felt by our community.

These are our four priorities:

1. **RACIAL EQUITY:** Racial equity must be embedded in the form, function, and practices of the department. We must embark upon a thorough examination of where disparity is rooted and have urgency around rooting it out. We do not believe that the creation of DCYF is racial equity in itself. Rather, we believe this department will provide a stronger platform for the transformations needed for achieving racial equity in the future.
2. **ACCOUNTABILITY TO CHILD OUTCOMES:** This effort cannot just be about transforming the structure of public sector services – we must define the outcomes we want to see, get the data needed to see if we are achieving those outcomes, and have strong oversight and advisory structures.
3. **EARLY LEARNING:** We want a continued high priority for early learning. Early learning is a proven strategy for achieving improved child outcomes and decreasing opportunity gaps. DCYF must maintain a commitment to delivering quality and access across the early learning spectrum and show priority for early learning at multiple levels. The department must also recognize that early learning is not just a program or “intervention”, but rather a developmental period in the lives of all children.
4. **FUNDING:** We will advocate for sufficient funding to establish DCYF and position it to accomplish its goals. The consolidation cannot be done on a cost-savings or cost-neutral basis. While the exact cost will be debated by the legislature, we believe it is a worthwhile – and cost-effective – investment in better outcomes for children, youth, and families.

*For more information:*

*Jon Gould, Deputy Director, Children's Alliance, [jon@childrensalliance.org](mailto:jon@childrensalliance.org)*