



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

Children's Alliance Priorities in the Department of Children, Youth, and Families Legislation (2SHB 1661)

The proposal to integrate 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, Children's Alliance has identified four key areas for the focus of our advocacy:

1. Racial equity in form, function, and practices of the agency;
2. Accountability to the well-being of children across outcomes, oversight, and data, and incorporation of the voices and perspectives of families;
3. A continued high priority for early learning;
4. Funding sufficient to establish and position the agency to accomplish its goals.

Children's Alliance is very pleased to see a number of our priorities reflected in the most recent version of the house bill (2SHB 1661) as it passed the House Appropriations Committee on February 24, 2017.

Below are the provisions in the legislation addressing Children's Alliance priorities.

Provisions Addressing Racial Equity:

- **Findings:** Acknowledges disproportionality and a priority to address equity, disproportionality, and disparity in service delivery and outcomes; need for delivery of frequent, transparent reporting on outcomes by race, ethnicity and geography; and importance of partnership with tribes. (Sec. 1(6))
- **Mission:** Includes partnership with Tribes and communities and equitable service delivery. (Sec. 101(1)(b))
- **Metrics:** Requires metrics regarding reducing disparities by family income and race/ethnicity for each outcome. (Sec. 101(3)(a))
- **Outcome Measures:** Includes a specific outcome measure on the reduction of racial and ethnic disparity and disproportionality in system involvement and across child and youth outcomes. (Sec. 101(3)(c)(viii)).
- **Systemic Barriers:** Requires the department to minimize or eliminate systemic barriers. (Sec. 101(4)(a))
- **Partnership:** Tasks the Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability (OIAA) as transition office with establishing mechanisms for effectively partnering with a variety of groups in including Tribes, communities of color, and families. (Sec. 103(2)(c)(i))
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Requires OIAA to consult with parents and families of color on disparity and disproportionality in the department's outcomes, programs, and services. (Sec. 103(2)(e))
- **Consultation with Tribes:** Directs OIAA to develop a consultation policy and protocol with Tribes that is comprehensive and cooperative. (Sec. 103(2)(g))

Provisions Addressing Accountability to Child Outcomes

- **Outcome Measures:** Directs the department to develop definitions, work plans, metrics, and short- and long-term population level goals for child, youth, and family outcomes and report on progress annually. Details a wide array of child, youth, and family outcome measures across early learning, child welfare, and juvenile justice services. (Sec. 101(2) and Sec. 101(3))
- **Data-Focused and Transparent:** Requires the department help create a data-focused environment with aligned outcomes and shared accountability and to make data available to the public. (Sec. 101(4-5))
- **Parent and Family Engagement in Advisory Bodies:** Directs OIAA to create a stakeholder advisory mechanism and external review protocol in consultation with current advisory bodies, parents, families, foster parents, and kinship care providers. Requires OIAA to appoint an external stakeholder committee that includes parent, youth, and Tribal representatives to advise on priorities and management. (Sec. 103(2)(e) and Sec. 104(2)(i))
- **Oversight:** Includes representatives from parent stakeholder groups on oversight board; allows board to survey parents, providers, and consumers to assess performance of department; and requires board to annually report on progress of department in meeting stated outcome goals. (Sec. 105(2-11))

Provisions Addressing Priority for Early Learning:

- **Findings:** Includes several strong findings calling out the importance of quality early childhood education. (Sec. 1(2-4))
- **Vision and Mission:** Addresses several aspects of early learning in vision and mission. (Sec. 101(1))
- **Outcome Measures:** Establishes several outcome measures related to improving child development and school readiness the department must address as measured by WaKIDS, Early Achievers, and supply of licensed child care. (Sec. 101(3)(c)(i))
- **Working Connections:** Requires OIAA to deliver a report outlining plan to transition eligibility for Working Connections child care over to DCYF. (Sec. 103(2)(i))
- **Oversight:** Includes early learning expertise on oversight board. (Sec. 105(2)(a))

Sufficient Funding

Children's Alliance fourth priority for sufficient funding will only be addressed in budget proposals once they are released. We are working with budget writers in the House and Senate to advocate for the funding necessary to establish and position the Department of Children, Youth, and Families to accomplish its goals.

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