



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families

**Children's Alliance Priorities in the
Department of Children, Youth, and Families Legislation
(Senate Committee Striker to E2SHB 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 bill as it passed the Senate Human Services, Mental Health, and Housing Committee (March 28, 2017).

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

Provisions Addressing Racial Equity:

- **Findings:** Recognizes the importance of culturally and linguistically responsive early learning. 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(4,7)).
- **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)).
- **Inclusion of Tribes:** Requires Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability (OIAA) as a transition office to include federally recognized tribal representatives and address tribal specific topics when convening research institutions to establish priorities for outcomes, administrative structure, and mechanisms for partnership (Sec. 103(2)(c)). Includes tribes and tribal governments as bodies to include in core decision-making, aligning, and review processes.
- **Partnership:** Tasks 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)).
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Includes consultation with stakeholders on the development of the plan to establish DCYF (Sec. 103(2)). Requires that tribes and families be included in the development of a stakeholder advisory mechanism and that both that mechanism and the external review protocol include ongoing consultation with tribes, families, and a cross-cultural representation of communities of color (Sec. 103(2)(e)). Directs OIAA to appoint an external stakeholder committee that values racial and ethnic diversity and includes tribal representatives and representatives from communities of color (Sec. 104(2)(i)).

- **Oversight on Racial Equity:** Directs OIAA to make recommendations for external review oversight on disparity and disproportionality in the department's outcomes, programs, and services (Sec. 103(2)(e)). Requires Oversight Board to include a subject matter expert in reducing disparities in child outcomes by family income and race/ethnicity (Sec. 105(2)(a)).
- **Formal 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 (Sec. 103(2)(e)). Requires appointment of an external stakeholder committee that includes parent representatives to advise on priorities and management (Sec. 104(2)(i)).
- **Oversight:** Includes three 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, culturally and linguistically responsive early childhood education. Acknowledges the critical role of community-based providers and the need for increased support for professionals working with children (Sec. 1(2-4, 11)).
- **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 by a specific date (Sec. 103(2)(i)).
- **Provider Representation:** Requires OIOAA to appoint community-based providers to external stakeholder committee (Sec 104(2)(i)).
- **Oversight:** Includes two subject matter experts in early learning on oversight board, one in implementation and includes one early learning parent stakeholder group representative (Sec. 105(2)(a)).
- **Licensing Review:** Establishes new process for reviewing and appealing adverse child care licensing decisions for issues not including health and safety violations (Sec. 105(3)(g) and Sec. 115).

Sufficient Funding

Children's Alliance's 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.

For more information: Jon Gould, Deputy Director, Children's Alliance, jon@childrensalliance.org