



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

The newly established Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) presents a once in a generation opportunity to structure government for positive outcomes for children, youth, and families in Washington State. The [legislation](#) creating DCYF provides a strong vision, mission, framework, and accountability measures regarding racial equity.

DCYF Vision and Mission (Sec. 101(1)(a-b))

- **Vision:** The vision for the department is that Washington state's children and youth grow up safe and healthy - thriving physically, emotionally, and academically, nurtured by family and community.
- **Mission:** The department, in partnership with state and local agencies, tribes, and communities, shall protect children and youth from harm and promote healthy development with effective, high quality prevention, intervention, and early education services delivered in an equitable manner.

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(3,6)).
- **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 DCYF to minimize or eliminate systemic barriers (Sec. 101(4)(a)).
- **Inclusion of and Formal Consultation with 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)(b)). Includes tribes and tribal governments as bodies to include in core decision-making, aligning, and review processes. Directs OIAA to develop a consultation policy and protocol with tribes that is comprehensive and cooperative (Sec. 103(2)(g)).
- **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)(i)).
- **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 for Children, Youth, and Families to include a subject matter expert in reducing disparities in child outcomes by family income and race/ethnicity (Sec. 101(10)(a)).

Provisions Addressing Accountability to Child Outcomes

- **Outcome Measures:** Directs DCYF 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(2-3)).
- **Data-Focused and Transparent:** Requires DCYF to 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 and foster parent representatives to advise on priorities and management (Sec. 104(2)(i)).
- **Oversight:** Includes a current or former foster parent representative, representative of an organization that advocates for the best interest of the child, and a parent stakeholder group representative on Oversight Board for Children, Youth, and Families; 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. 101(9-20)).

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, 9)).
- **Vision and Mission:** Addresses several aspects of early learning in vision and mission (Sec. 101(1)(a-b)).
- **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 in both centers and homes (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 July 1, 2019 (Sec. 103(2)(i)).
- **Provider Representation:** Requires OIAA to appoint community-based providers to external stakeholder committee (Sec 104(2)(i)).
- **Oversight:** Includes two subject matter experts in early learning (including one expert in implementation) and a parent stakeholder group representative on the Oversight Board for Children, Youth, and Families (Sec. 101(10)(a)).
- **Licensing Review:** Establishes new process for reviewing and appealing adverse child care licensing decisions for issues not including health and safety violations (Sec. 101(10)(g)).

A summary of House Bill 1661 can be found [here](#).

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