



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

2005 Washington State Legislative Session: Wise Investments in Children and Families

May 2005



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Have A Heart For Kids Day 2005

In the 2005 state legislative session, children made significant gains against a backdrop of a sizable budget deficit and four years of devastating budget cuts. In a number of areas, legislators and the Governor made new investments that will improve the lives of children and families.

The Children's Alliance decided to focus on policy solutions in three areas for the 2005 legislature: **children's health care, child nutrition, and reform of child welfare.** Given the size of the state budget deficit, we also prioritized securing new revenue to avoid further cuts to services for children and families.

We are pleased to report significant victories in each of our priority areas. Much credit for the success of the 2005 session goes to the strong and consistent voice for children in Olympia this year. Constituents visiting, calling, and writing their legislators, expert lobbying, legislative champions, strong allies, and favorable media coverage all contributed to making children's issues impossible to ignore.

In **children's health care**, lawmakers responded to our call to both restore coverage for children and take a strong step toward health care for every child in Washington. Governor Gregoire set the tone when she chose children's health for her first major policy decision. On January 19th, the Governor directed state officials to enroll children on an annual eligibility cycle. She also rejected planned monthly premiums for children in low-income families. These decisions were major components of our children's health policy package.

We then turned our attention to legislators with our campaign to **restore coverage for non-U.S. citizen children** who lost health care in the cuts made by the 2002 legislature. In the last weekend of the session, legislators passed House Bill 1441, which creates a new comprehensive health coverage program for immigrant children below the federal poverty level who are not eligible for Medicaid. The new law also declares the state's intent for all children to have health coverage within five years. All told, these steps will allow over **38,000 additional children to receive health care** in the next two years.

We also achieved success in two important childhood nutrition areas: **expanding school breakfast and access to fresh fruits and vegetables** for low income families.

Legislators passed House Bill 1771, which expands school breakfast to all high-need schools in the state (schools where at least 40% of students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals). The state budget also includes \$106,000 to implement this expansion, although the legislature did not increase the per-meal reimbursement statewide as we had requested.

We were also successful in advocating for \$250,000 for the **WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program**, a critical source of high quality nutritious food for low-income families. This funding will help thousands of families access fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets.

Continuing our work on **reforming the state's child welfare system**, we began the session urging legislators to address the disproportionate number of children of color who enter and remain in the child welfare system, to provide adequate funding for non-profit agencies that partner with the state to provide services to children, and to ensure that adolescents receive appropriate services and supports.

In the most significant investment in child welfare in over a decade, lawmakers allocated a total of \$23 million for improvements. \$10.1 million was added for quicker responses to allegations of abuse and neglect and for 30-day face-to-face visits by social workers to children in foster care. \$5 million will go toward improvements in responding to cases of chronic neglect where substance abuse plays a role. \$900,000 was approved for education coordinators for foster children.

Addressing disproportionality for children of color and providing adequate funding for non-profit agencies that serve children and families were two areas legislators did not fully address. A work session on disproportionality in the House Children and Family Services Committee put this issue on the agenda of the legislature and opened the door to future policy solutions. One success in this arena was the approval of \$200,000 for the Kinship Care Navigator Program.

The non-profit agencies that partner with the state to provide services to children only received a vendor rate increase of 1% per year, substantially less than the 3.2% rate increase requested and needed.

The legislators' and Governor's willingness to raise **\$481 million of new revenue** was a significant factor in preserving and expanding support for children and families. At the outset, prospects for new revenue seemed dim. The session began in January with projections of a \$2 billion budget deficit and the Governor and many legislators pledging to make cuts rather than raise taxes. A State Supreme Court ruling early in the session invalidated the state's estate tax, increasing the deficit and adding pressure on services to children and families.

During the session, a coalition of health and human service organizations organized to make the case for a responsible budget. The coalition, with significant support from the Children's Alliance, succeeded in making the case for new revenue. This revenue will come from a re-authorized estate tax, increases in existing tobacco and hard liquor taxes, and adding a tax on extended warranties for certain consumer products.

While children and families made progress this session, there is much to do to continue that progress and extend political will to make children a higher priority. In the short term, we must be vigilant about shaping and monitoring the implementation of new policies and investments. Support must reach the intended families and children. Additionally, many services to children are determined by administrative actions of state government. Vigilance is essential.

Areas of inequity or consistent neglect will need to be addressed by future legislatures. And, the state's overarching structural budget problems will continue to impede basic needs from being met until tax reform is enacted.

1. How did the Children's Alliance Legislative Agenda fare?

After a public agenda setting process, the Children's Alliance adopted priorities for the 2005 Legislative session. The following is an update on how each fared.

Children's Health: *Restore children's health care*

Background:

Due to budget cuts over the past three years, more than 57,000 children have lost publicly funded health care coverage in Washington. The first cut, in 2002, was the elimination of a state-funded program called the Children's Health Program created to protect 28,000 immigrant children who were not eligible for Medicaid. Today, it is likely that more than 17,000 of these children are without coverage.

The second cut, implemented in April 2003, added numerous administrative barriers to the Medicaid program that made enrolling in and retaining Medicaid more difficult for families. These administrative barriers included a shorter eligibility period of 6 months and elimination of continuous eligibility, which had allowed children to remain eligible for the entire certification period regardless of monthly fluctuations in income. These changes have caused more than 40,000 children to drop off the Medicaid program.

The Children's Alliance and our allies began the 2005 legislative session supporting three steps to curb the increases in the number of uninsured children in Washington: restoration of the Children's Health Program for immigrant children up to 200% of the federal poverty level, a return to 12 months of continuous eligibility, and no premiums for children's Medicaid.

What Happened:

A week after taking office, Governor Gregoire directed state officials to return to 12 months of continuous eligibility and to continue the delay on children's Medicaid premiums. She followed this announcement with a budget proposal that included money to implement both of these initiatives. \$17.5 million was also included in her budget to restore the Children's Health Program for 16,700 immigrant children with incomes below 100% FPL. Both the Senate and the House followed the Governor's lead and included \$81.4 million to return to 12-months of continuous eligibility and delay premiums. However, only the House budget proposal included funding for restoration of the Children's Health Program at an amount of \$13.5 million to fund health coverage for 8,750 children.

The final budget includes \$95 million to delay monthly Medicaid premiums, return to 12 months of continuous eligibility and restore the Children's Health Program for 8,750 immigrant children at or below the federal poverty level. These efforts are expected to result in more than 38,000 children obtaining health care coverage over the next two years.

In addition, the legislature passed House Bill 1441, "Health Care for Every Child," sponsored by Rep. Judy Clibborn. This bill establishes the intention to make sure that all Washington children have health insurance by 2010. This legislation also re-establishes the Children's Health Program for immigrant children at or below the federal poverty level not otherwise eligible for Medicaid because of their citizenship status. Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law on May 4th.

Next Steps:

We will work with state officials to monitor the implementation of the Children's Health Program and create opportunities for outreach to assist families who have lost coverage over the past two years. We will also begin advocating to expand coverage for immigrant children up to 200% of the federal poverty level so that coverage for

immigrant children is on par with coverage for citizen children. Finally, we will continue to work to educate the public on the value of health coverage for children to further the goal of House Bill 1441: health care for every child by 2010.

Hunger: *School Breakfast*

Background:

Washington continues to rank in the top 10 states for hunger, and occupied a spot in the top 5 for eight years. Last year's Act for Hungry Families made important progress in making food stamps accessible to more working families, and in bringing school lunches and summer meals to more low-income children. The initial draft of the Act included expansion of access to the school breakfast program. After this section was removed in 2004, the Children's Alliance, Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition, and other allies decided that a solid first step in moving toward wider access to school breakfast in 2005 was to close loopholes in the original 1989 law requiring breakfast in all "severe need" schools (where 40% or more of students were eligible for free or reduced-price meals).

What Happened:

Legislation was drafted to simplify the 1989 school breakfast law and make it part of the set of activities outlined in the Act for Hungry Families. Rep. Joe McDermott was the prime sponsor of House Bill 1771, which was introduced with bi-partisan support. At hearings on the bill in the House Education and Appropriations Committees, child advocates, food bank directors, school nutrition directors and school board members testified to the importance of school breakfast and the need to ensure that more children have access to the program.

The bill passed the House 60 to 34 and moved to the Senate. In the Senate Education Committee, an amendment was added stating that if funds were not available for implementation of the bill it would be null and void. The Senate approved the bill 43 to 3 on April 15 and Governor Gregoire signed the bill into law on May 4th. \$106,000 in funds for implementation were first allocated in the House budget, then included in the final state operating budget. Key allies in this effort included the Washington Food Coalition, Washington School Nutrition Association and the Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition.

Next Steps:

As with the Act for Hungry Families, it will be important to monitor the implementation of the bill. Both the school lunch and summer food requirements in the 2004 Act, and the breakfast requirement of 2005 bill, require that the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction develop criteria by which schools can receive waivers to the requirements to offer meals. It will be critical to ensure that the criteria respond to real physical plant and other capacity issues in schools and not simply provide an "out" for schools not desiring to start breakfast, lunch or summer programs.

Hunger: *WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program*

Background:

The WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP) provide checks to low-income moms, children and seniors to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at local farmers markets. In 2004, over 55,000 moms and kids and over 11,000 seniors participated in these programs with a combined benefit to small family farms of \$1,045,000. These programs are a critical source of high-quality nutritious food for low-income families and seniors. The programs are also a huge support for small farms and rural economic development in Washington.

Cuts at the federal level to the WIC FMNP threatened to leave behind more than 4,200 women and children. And a depletion of Vitamin Settlement Fund dollars used to supplement federal funds for the Senior FMNP would have cut

services to more than 7,000 seniors. Based on early estimates, advocates asked for \$400,000 for the WIC FMNP and \$750,000 for the Senior FMNP to fill the funding gaps and maintain 2004 program levels.

What happened:

In response to our request, Rep. Kelli Linville and Sen. Marilyn Rasmussen agreed to sponsor companion bills (HB 1593 and SB 5597) that included the budget requests for both Farmers Market Nutrition Programs. Both bills died before passing out of their respective houses but additional funding for the Senior FMNP was included in the proposed Senate budget (\$500,000) and funding for both the WIC FMNP (\$250,000) and Senior FMNP (\$682,000) was included in the House budget. **The final budget included the House budget levels of funding for both programs - \$250,000 for WIC FMNP and \$682,000 for Senior FMNP.** Current estimates show that these funding levels are enough to fill the gaps left by the reduction in federal funds and the loss of the Vitamin Settlement Fund dollars.

Next steps:

While this was a significant victory for Farmers Market Nutrition Programs, our vision is to have both programs become statewide. Currently the WIC FMNP is available in 23 out of the 39 counties and the Senior FMNP is available in 35 counties. Advocates will continue to pursue and protect funding at both the state and federal levels to expand the reach of these critical programs.

Child Welfare Reform

Background:

Protecting children from abuse and neglect is one of our most important responsibilities. When the state fails to meet this basic threshold of protection and duty, the consequences fall on the most vulnerable members of our society: children and youth unable to fend against the direct and indirect ramifications of abuse or neglect.

While no state has a perfect child welfare system, ours has been rocked by a number of particularly devastating reviews and child fatalities in the past year. In February 2004, the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) scored Washington among the bottom third of all states in the nation meeting CFSR standards. Then, in August 2004, the state agreed to settle the Braam class action lawsuit. While we applauded DSHS's decision to settle this multi-year lawsuit, the findings of this settlement pointed to significant problems in the foster care system, especially for adolescents and sibling groups.

This past year, the high-profile deaths of Raphael Gomez, Sirita Sotelo, and Justice and Raiden Robinson further highlighted the on-going problems in foster care. The deaths of Raphael and Sirita left many wondering about the adequacy of transition services and the impact of multiple placements. The tragic deaths of Justice and Raiden left many advocates and practitioners in our state frustrated by the growing trend of chronic neglect cases.

DSHS and the Children's Administration proposed a comprehensive reform plan called *Kids Come First Phase II* in order to address both the federal CFSR findings and the settlement terms of the Braam lawsuit. The plan included key reforms including splitting investigative child protective services (CPS) from child welfare services (CWS) and making more timely face-to-face visits with children and families. In addition to these reforms, which we supported, the Children's Alliance advocated for addressing the disproportionate number of children of color who enter and remain in the child welfare system, services for kinship caregivers, adolescents, prevention and early intervention programs, and an increased vendor rate for child-serving agencies in order to ensure adequate capacity in the community for critical services.

What happened:

In her budget proposal to the legislature, Gov. Gregoire identified child safety as a priority by providing a total of \$18 million for the Kids Come First II reform plan. In April, however, stories of a \$12 million deficit in the Children's Administration raised new questions about accountability in the child welfare system. The Children's Alliance worked with other organizations to keep the focus on funding much-needed reforms while at the same time trying to analyze the ramifications of this deficit on children and families served by DSHS, either directly or through its contracted partner agencies.

Through the leadership of Gov. Gregoire and Rep. Ruth Kagi, in the end, the Legislature provided nearly \$23 million (total) for various improvements to child welfare. Enhancements included in the \$23 million will fund: the new CPS/CWS redesign; 24-hour response times for emergent CPS allegations and 72-hour response times for non-emergent cases; 30-day visits; and education coordinators for foster youth, which were specifically identified in the Braam settlement. Part of this \$23 million also includes \$5 million to fund the Justice and Raiden Act, a measure that would give CPS greater flexibility in intervening in cases of chronic neglect where substance abuse plays a role. This measure, originally introduced as HB 1482 by Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson, was amended onto a related bill, SB 5922, which unanimously passed the Legislature.

In addition to these significant investments, we were pleased to see legislators provide \$200,000 for the kinship care navigator program. We were disappointed, however, that vendor rates were only increased by 1% versus the 3.2% increase we sought.

Next steps:

The 2005 interim promises to be a critical juncture for child welfare services and the foster care system in our state. A continued focus on the important reform efforts funded by the Legislature this session will be important in order to keep progress moving towards positive outcomes that provide stability for kids in foster care. Leadership changes within Children's Administration will need to be closely monitored in order to ensure such a focus. The Children's Alliance will continue to play a leadership role in discussions with DSHS about the deficit problems in Children's Administration, and specifically, about the collaborative role providers and other stakeholders must play in determining how to address current and any future budgetary problems.

2. Bills the Children’s Alliance supported that passed and became law: ¹

Foster care scholarship endowment	House Bill 1050 creates the foster care scholarship endowment program. Sponsored by Rep. Phyllis Kenney, HB1050 directs \$150,000 from the general fund to the Higher Education Coordinating (HEC) Board for this endowment fund, which will be available for foster youth between the ages of 16 and 23 and who were in foster care for a minimum of 6 months since age 14. Other eligibility criteria are established.
Foster youth higher education	House Bill 1079 establishes a foster youth post-secondary education and training coordinating committee. Sponsored by Rep. Ruth Kagi, the committee is charged to examine issues pertaining to foster youth and post-secondary education. An amendment relating to the state need grant was also included, which provides that when the Higher Education Coordinating Board makes annual awards of state need grants, special consideration will be given to foster youth.
Keep Kids Safe license plates	House Bill 1097 , sponsored by Sen. Debbie Regala, authorizes the Department of Transportation to issue license plates recognizing child abuse and neglect prevention work. These “Keep Kids Safe” license plates will cost \$45 (and \$30 thereafter for renewals), with the proceeds after administrative costs going into the Children’s Trust Fund.
Early learning council	House Bill 1152 declares the Legislature’s intent to improve the quality of early learning in the state. The bill recognizes the importance of public-private partnerships, and establishes the Washington Early Learning Council to provide leadership and vision in order to improve the quality, affordability and accessibility of early learning opportunities. The Council is also charged to develop a voluntary rating system for childcare and a tiered reimbursement formula for licensed childcare providers.
Mental health parity	House Bill 1154 , sponsored by Rep. Shay Schual-Berke, requires that insurance coverage for mental health services be at parity with service and scope levels for medical and surgical services. Parity requirements are phased in over five years, and small businesses (groups with 50 or fewer employees) are excluded from the law.
Mandatory minimum sentences	House Bill 1187 , sponsored by Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson, removes the requirement that judges impose mandatory minimum terms of confinement for juveniles who are tried as adults. Under this bill, judges are permitted to sentence a juvenile who is tried as an adult to any sentence within the standard range for the offense, or to impose an exceptional sentence downward.
Public access to CHIN/ARY proceedings	House Bill 1279 , sponsored by Rep. Ruth Kagi, allows public access to child in need of services (CHIN) and at-risk youth (ARY) hearings, unless the presiding judge finds that such access is not in the best interest of the youth involved in the hearings.
Kinship care oversight committee	House Bill 1280 , sponsored by Rep. Eric Pettigrew, reauthorizes the statewide Kinship Care Oversight Committee for another five years. The Kinship Care Oversight Committee has been instrumental in advancing education and policy changes around the needs of kinship caregivers. Kinship care represents the fastest growing out-of-home placement option in the state. The Committee sunset in December 2004, but passage of HB 1280 insures that the Committee will continue its work for the next several years.
Medical consent	House Bill 1281 , sponsored by Rep. Eric Pettigrew and establishes a prioritized list of caregivers who may give informed consent to health care for minors. Medical consent is sometimes a barrier for kinship caregivers, especially in the absence of any formal legal standing caregivers may have.

¹ To check on whether or not the Governor signed a bill, see: <http://www.governor.wa.gov/actions/bills/2005/default.htm>

2. Bills the Children's Alliance supported that passed, continued:

<p>Individual Development Accounts</p>	<p>House Bill 1408, sponsored by Rep. Eric Pettigrew, creates the individual development accounts (IDA) program for low-income individuals and an IDA program for foster youth. Originally funded through the WorkFirst program and TANF dollars, the IDA program helps low-income individuals establish personal savings accounts that will be matched by the state or a sponsoring organization in order to help break the cycle of chronic poverty.</p>
<p>Children of incarcerated parents</p>	<p>House Bill 1426 creates an oversight committee to develop an interagency plan to provide necessary services to children of incarcerated parents. The oversight committee will identify existing resources and make recommendations for further collaboration among the Department of Corrections, Children's Administration, Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration, law enforcement, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the courts, community-based organizations, and other partners.</p>
<p>Health care for all children</p>	<p>House Bill 1441 declares Legislative intent that all children in Washington have health care by the year 2010 and re-establishes the Children's Health Program for non-U.S. citizen children. Sponsored by Rep. Judy Clibborn, it is an important restoration of health care for low income children. Since 2002 when the state-funded Children's Health program was eliminated, over 19,000 immigrant children have lost health care. HB 1441 creates a capped, Medicaid look-alike program for non-U.S. citizen children with household incomes at or below 100% of FPL.</p>
<p>School breakfast</p>	<p>House Bill 1771, sponsored by Rep. Joe McDermott, requires severe-needs schools to provide a school breakfast program. A severe-needs school is defined as a school having 40% or more of its student population eligible for the free and reduced meal program. A good cause exemption is allowed. Currently, there are about twenty severe-needs schools in the state that do not provide a breakfast program.</p>
<p>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)</p>	<p>Senate Bill 5213, sponsored by Sen. Dale Brandland, removes barriers to TANF for people with drug-related felony convictions. Current law provides certain restrictions to accessing TANF benefits for individuals with a drug-related felony. Other felonies are not included in this restriction. This bill eliminates those restrictions beginning September 1, 2005.</p>
<p>Omnibus mental health & substance abuse bill</p>	<p>Senate Bill 5763, Sen. Jim Hargrove's omnibus mental health and substance abuse act, makes significant policy changes to how mental health and chemical dependency treatment services are currently funded and provided. Among the many provisions of this act is the establishment of chemical dependency treatment specialists in every Division of Children and Family Services office in the state. This is a significant step towards directly impacting the correlation between substance abuse and chronic neglect cases.</p>
<p>Adolescent victims of abuse</p>	<p>Senate Bill 5583, regarding older victims of abuse or neglect, was sponsored by Sen. Debbie Regala as a result of concerns that abuse or neglect allegations involving adolescent victims were not being adequately screened by CPS. SB 5583 requires Children's Administration to develop a curriculum to train staff on how to better respond to older victims of abuse and neglect, and directs the DSHS to review a representative sampling of screening decisions around adolescent victims on a quarterly basis.</p>
<p>Postpartum Depression</p>	<p>Senate Bill 5898 directs the Washington Council for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (WCPCAN) to initiate a public awareness campaign concerning the signs and treatment of post-partum depression.</p>
<p>Justice and Raiden Act</p>	<p>Senate Bill 5922. The underlying Senate bill provides notification for parents under investigation by CPS of their rights. Named after two young children who tragically died as a result of severe neglect, the Act was amended to provide CPS with more flexibility than they currently have to intervene in cases of chronic neglect where substance abuse plays a role. Originally introduced as House 1482 by Rep. Mary Lou Dickerson, this Act was amended onto SB 5922, sponsored by Sen. Val Stevens, in a show of bipartisan support for combating chronic neglect in the state.</p>

3. Good Budget Investments:

Children's health care	The budget provides funding to either restore or maintain health care coverage for 38,750 low-income children in the state. This includes delaying the imposition of premiums, which will help maintain coverage for 5,000 children. Changing back to a 12-month continuous eligibility review period is estimated to restore coverage to 25,000 children. Funding was also provided to serve 8,750 non-U.S. citizen children whose family incomes are at or below 100% of the federal poverty level through a re-established state-funded Children's Health Program.
Foster care improvements	\$10.1 million General Fund State (GF-S) and \$14.6 million total is provided for a new CPS/CWS redesign, to shorten the length of time in responding to CPS referrals, and to institute 30-day face-to-face visits. There is \$900,000 GF-S (\$1.3 million total) for education coordinators, an important element in the Braam settlement. \$3.5 million GF-S (\$5 million total) is also funded for chronic neglect cases. And, \$1.1 million GF-S (\$2.3 million total) funds chemical dependency treatment specialists in every DCFS office in the state. In total, these enhancements represent a \$23 million investment to improve foster care.
Child care subsidy rates	\$26 million is provided to increase childcare subsidy rates in the state. Washington's current subsidy rate is at the 25 th percentile.
Mental health/chemical dependency	In addition to funding \$80 million to backfill the loss of federal funds for mental health, the Legislature made significant investments this session for mental health and chemical dependency treatment services. Spearheaded by Sen. Hargrove's omnibus mental health and substance abuse legislation, SB 5763, the final budget included \$39 million to close the chemical dependency treatment gap, and an additional \$21 million to fund new services and enhancements for mental health and chemical dependency treatment. Especially important for child welfare is funding to provide a chemical dependency treatment specialist in every Division of Children and Family Services office in the state.
Senior and WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program	\$682,000 is included for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) and \$250,000 for the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) FMNP. These state investments represent the approximate loss of federal funds for both programs; this funding will help both programs maintain 2004 participation levels.
Food banks	Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP) funding was increased by \$1.45 million. This is an important investment in food banks in the state.
Kinship Caregiver Navigator	In 2004, the Legislature authorized the creation of a kinship care navigator pilot program, which was designed to be a resource of information and support for kinship caregivers. With funding from Casey Family programs, the pilot programs were successfully launched in Seattle and Yakima. To help continue funding these navigator programs, Rep. Eric Pettigrew took the lead in securing \$200,000 from state funds this session.
Limited English Proficiency Pathways	\$1.5 million is included for the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Pathways program. Two years ago, the LEP program lost significant federal funding for this program, which provides vocational training and services (including English-language skills) to refugees and other recent immigrants.
Individual Development Accounts	\$1 million is provided for the individual development account program, a portion of which will also specifically be available for foster youth.
Naturalization	\$1 million is provided for naturalization services to help non-U.S. citizens become citizens.
Crime victims compensation	\$4 million is funded for crime victim's compensation.

3. Good Budget Investments, continued:

Developmental Disabilities Family support	\$2.5 million (total) is provided for a “Flexible Family Support” pilot program for families who are providing care and support for family members with developmental disabilities. It is anticipated that approximately 1,400 families will receive assistance as a result of this funding.
Developmental Disabilities employment/day programs	\$2.9 million GF-S (\$4.1 million total) is provided to expand employment and day services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Priority is given to individuals transitioning from high school.
Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP)	\$2.9 million is provided to increase ECEAP vendor rates by 4% in the first year of the biennium and 4% in the second year of the biennium. This money will also pay for an additional 282 enrollment slots.
Children’s Advocacy Centers	\$355,000 is provided for Children’s Advocacy Centers, which facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach toward the investigation and prosecution of child abuse allegations. A 50 percent match is required of children's advocacy centers receiving funding.
Post-partum depression	\$25,000 is provided in the final budget to fund a post-partum depression awareness campaign. This is a small, but important, investment by the state which will help generate support from private and other non-state resources in order to help educate the public about this issue.

4. Worthy Budget Proposals Not Adequately Addressed:

Vendor rate increase	Advocates requested a vendor rate increase on par with the COLA’s teachers and most state employees were receiving in the budget, 3.2% in 2006 and 1.6% in 2007. In the end, the Legislature funded vendor rate increases only at 1% in the first year of the biennium and 1% in the second year of the biennium. Though a small step, this increase is not adequate to meet the need of many service providers in the state.
Child care subsidy rates	While there was a significant investment made in this year’s budget to increase childcare subsidy rates, the need remains fairly significant. The original request was \$84 million in order to raise subsidy rates to the 58 th percentile. Until recently, Washington’s rates were consistently at the 75 th percentile. Although the \$26 million funded by the Legislature this session was a major gain for childcare in our state, much more remains to be done in order to raise subsidy rates to adequate levels.
School breakfast	The current reimbursement rate provided by the state to schools that provide breakfast programs is 12 cents per meal. While the bulk of school meal programs are federally funded, even federal reimbursement is not adequate to fully cover all costs of meal programs. We had requested \$1.9 million to help increase the per meal reimbursement rate for breakfast programs to 15 cents per meal.
Community health clinics	Community health clinic grants were reduced by \$5 million. The Children’s Alliance and others argued for maintenance of current grant levels.

5. Budget Cuts:

Juvenile violence prevention grants	\$997,000 was transferred out of juvenile violence prevention (JVP) grants. This transfer represents nearly a 70% funding reduction from the previous biennium. JVP grants are administered by the Governor's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee. These grants fund various prevention strategies statewide including mentoring, home visitation, and counseling and training for at-risk youth and their families.
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5. Budget Cuts, continued:

Community health clinic grants	\$5 million was cut for community health clinic grants.
Regional crisis residential centers	\$1.7 million was cut for regional crisis residential centers (CRC's) by modifying contracts to maximize utilization rates. CRC's are short-term, semi-secure facilities that serve runaway youth and adolescents in conflict. They play an important role in helping youth and families in conflict transition towards reconciliation whenever possible.
Family Policy Council and Community Health and Safety Networks	\$2.4 million was reduced for both the Family Policy Council and funding for the State Community Public Health and Safety Networks. The Family Policy Council works to make systemic changes to improve outcomes for children and families, and works with the community-based networks to prevent child abuse, youth substance abuse, and other social problems.

6. Other Bills of Interest:

Mental health for minors	House Bill 1058 was a bill the Children's Alliance, Public Defenders, and other organizations supported. Changes made by the Senate to shorten the due process timelines made in the original bill significantly reduced protections for minors. This prompted many organizations to oppose the version of the bill as passed by the Legislature. The bill passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor.
Auto safety for children	House Bill 1475 strengthens current automobile safety laws regarding children traveling in cars. Sponsored by Rep. Shay Schual-Berke, the bill modifies current law by requiring children under eight years of age be restrained in child restraint systems, unless the child is four feet nine inches or taller. Current law only requires children less than six years of age and/or sixty pounds to be restrained. Children under thirteen are required to sit in the back seat when practicable to do so, and the bill also provides immunity for safety technicians who inspect child restraint systems in good faith. This bill represents the most progressive child passenger safety provisions in the country. The bill passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor.
Guardianship bill	House Bill 2030 , which would have eliminated dependency guardianships in our state and provided for subsidized guardianships instead, was originally supported by the Children's Alliance as it passed the House. Sponsored by Rep. Mary Helen Roberts, the bill was amended in the Senate to eliminate the subsidies. We voiced strong concerns with this change, and the bill died in the Senate Rules Committee.
Sirita's Law	House Bill 2156 establishes a task force that will explore current practice decisions surrounding when a child is returned home to a parent. Sponsored by Rep. Bill Hinkle, HB 2156 originally included provisions to shorten the timeframe for return of children from out-of-home care back to their biological parents. The bill was changed into a task force to more comprehensively study the implications of the practice and policy changes proposed by the original bill. The bill passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor.
Mandatory reporting	SSB 5308 , sponsored by Sen. Jeanne Kohl-Welles, expands the mandatory reporting duties relating to suspicions of child abuse and neglect to individuals with supervisory capacity, whether in a for profit or non-profit organization. Supervisors are not required to report if they receive information as a result of privileged communication. The bill passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor.
Children's department study	Senate Bill 5872 , sponsored by Sen. Val Stevens, creates a task force to be staffed by legislative staff to explore the idea of creating a separate Children's Department from DSHS. The bill passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor.
Afterschool Programs	House Bill 1981 sought to expand state support for afterschool programs in Washington. The Children's Alliance supported this bill, but it did not pass.

6. Other Bills of Interest, continued:

Birth-3 early intervention services	House Bill 1107 , sought to require that, by September 1, 2008, school districts provide or contract for early intervention services to all eligible children with disabilities from birth to three years of age. The bill would also have established a birth-to-three task force to make recommendations concerning policies, procedures, and regulations in order to ensure implementation of an equitable statewide comprehensive system for all eligible children with disabilities from birth to three years of age. The Children's Alliance supported this bill, but it did not pass.
Community learning centers	HB 1981 would have created the Community Learning Center program to expand after school programs to 50 schools and 9,000 students. Sponsored by Rep. Joe McDermott, this bill was the result of a plan drafted by the Washington Afterschool Network and School's Out Washington intended to help students succeed in school and life through quality after-school programs. The Children's Alliance supported this legislation, which did not pass this session.

- For complete copies of any of the legislation detailed in the above report contact the Legislative Bill Room at (360) 786-7573 or go to: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/billinfo1/bills.cfm>
- Archive of messages and alerts from the Children's Alliance 2005 legislative session: <http://www.childrenshub.org/calliance/home.html>
- Detailed policy papers on Children's Alliance 2005 priorities: <http://childrensalliance.org/whatwedo/advocacy.cfm>
- This report is available online at www.childrensalliance.org/publications/reports.cfm
- Questions about this summary? Would you like a presentation for your agency or group? Contact Jon Gould at (206) 324-0340 x19 or jon@childrensalliance.org