Results for Kids in the 2019 Legislative Session

CHILDREN’S ALLIANCE

Working with parents, policymakers and community leaders from across Washington state, Children’s Alliance advances public policies that address the barriers of poverty and racism in order to give every child the opportunities they deserve. In the 2019 session, our advocacy produced the following results:

Full-family, comprehensive health coverage that promotes children’s health. In a great step forward for health equity this year, the legislature established COFA Islander Dental Care. This new bipartisan law makes no-cost dental coverage available to adults from Compact of Free Association (COFA) nations, including the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and Palau. Full-family health care with dental is proven to improve outcomes for kids.

Small steps forward for quality early learning. In an effort to stabilize the child care market, the state increased reimbursement rates for Working Connections Child Care—but additional investments will be needed to truly expand access to quality child care. While the legislature also funded preschool for 1,100 additional three- and four-year-olds, these efforts fall short of what’s needed. Lawmakers did pass the Child Care Access Now Act, House Bill 1344, which requires the state to develop a detailed plan to address the barriers of access to high-quality care—while preserving and expanding the diversity of the early care and education workforce.

Unprecedented progress for the dental access bill. While it did not become law, the bill to authorize dental therapy advanced further than it has ever before. Dental therapy stands to improve children and family health by increasing access to quality, community-based dental care.

Missed opportunities on revenue and the budget. The legislature did not fix our upside-down tax code or adopt a capital gains tax. While our advocacy helped create new revenue from a more progressive real estate excise tax, the legislature’s failure to enact a capital gains tax is a significant missed opportunity to set a better path for kids, families and the community-based services that keep them strong.

Advocates for Washington’s kids and families witnessed Gov. Jay Inslee sign two Children’s Alliance priorities into law: COFA Islander Dental Care (above) on May 8 and the Child Care Access Now Act (below) on May 13.

(over)
**Advocacy Works**

Every Washington child should have a great start in life. To connect kids with the opportunities they all deserve, we need bold, equity-focused public policies and investments—created through the work of parents, community leaders and public officials. Together, we can build a strong, shared future for all.

**JOIN**

We give you the tools to advocate for kids. Join today: www.childrensalliance.org/join-us.

**ACT**

Want to build leadership to take action alongside families in your community? Contact Emijah Smith (emijah@childrensalliance.org) or call (800) 854-KIDS.

**GIVE**

Every penny builds the movement for kids and racial equity. Give today: www.childrensalliance.org/why-give.

Charles Williams (above) attests to the needs of kids in his Spokane community at Have a Heart for Kids Day. Students from Tacoma’s Lincoln High School drumline lead Children’s Alliance members to the capitol steps (right); throughout the 2019 session, members and advocates like Tacoma’s Kelly Blucher (below) told legislators of their struggles to find affordable child care.