



- Arc of King County
- Child Care Aware of Washington
- Child Care Resources
- Child Care Action Council
- Childhaven
- Children's Alliance
- Children's Campaign Fund
- Children's Home Society
- Children's Therapy Center
- Committee for Children
- Denise Louie Education Center
- Early Care and Education Consortium
- Economic Opportunity Institute
- Educare Seattle
- First 5 FUNdamentals
- Foundation for Tacoma Students
- Help Me Grow Pierce County
- League of Education Voters
- Mission: Readiness
- MomsRising
- Neighborhood House
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- OneAmerica
- Partners for Our Children
- Project Child Success
- Puget Sound Educational Service District
- ReadyNation
- Save the Children
- Save the Children Action Network
- School's Out Washington
- Sound Child
- Southeast Seattle Education Coalition
- The Arc of King County
- Tiny Trees Preschool
- United Way of King County
- United Ways of the PNW
- WA Assn for the Education of Young Children
- WA Childcare Centers Association
- WA Communities for Children
- WA Federation of Independent Schools
- WA Physicians for Social Responsibility
- WA State Alliance of YMCAs
- WA State Assn of Head Start and ECEAP
- WA State Budget & Policy Center
- WA State Community Action Partnership
- WA State Parent Ambassadors
- WA STEM
- Wellspring Family Services
- WithinReach
- Zeno
- Partners:**
- Start Early
- Business Members:**
- Columbia City Consulting
- Ely Consulting

2021 Legislative Agenda (*updated 3/8/2021*)

Ensure that Every Child Can Thrive

Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive in school and life, regardless of race, ethnicity, home language, zip code, ability, or family income. Yet too few children in our state have access to the opportunities they need to thrive. This is especially true for Black, Indigenous and children of color. To maintain strong families and rebuild our economy, lawmakers should invest in early learning as a foundational response to COVID-19 and strengthen approaches that address racial disparities in the first five years.

⇒ **Raise Revenue to Invest in Kids (Pass [SB 5096](#) + other progressive revenue bills)**

To build necessary investments in our system, lawmakers should **create progressive state revenue streams that provide robust, stable, and necessary funding** and do not supplant existing state nor federal early learning funding.

⇒ **Help Families Afford the High Cost of Quality Child Care**

Strengthen Working Connections Child Care (WCCC). [WCCC helps tens of thousands of Washington families](#) connect their kids with trained and experienced caregivers so parents can work, needed now more than ever. Lawmakers should:

- ✓ Maintain provider reimbursement rates created in the 2020 state budget, which expanded access for families
- ✓ Permanently remove barriers to access (e.g., parent-student status, care for homeless families)
- ✓ Continue to provide families with copay relief and address affordability, including family eligibility with temporary changes in income (due to unemployment benefits or essential worker hazard pay)
 - Pass [SB 5023](#), addressing unemployment benefits / continuing WCCC
- ✓ Support Family, Friend & Neighbor caregivers, a preferred form of care for many families

⇒ **Support the Early Care & Education Workforce**

Stabilize and strengthen our early learning system - it cannot recover on its own and [without it, Washington's families and businesses cannot get back to work.](#) Investing now builds back our child care system even stronger. Lawmakers should support the dedicated professionals who care for Washington's next generation and:

- ✓ Maintain 2020 investments in Early Achievers and current student scholarships to increase the workforce
- ✓ Direct additional financial relief to avoid/address business closures and support PPE/COVID responses as needed
 - Pass [SB 5136](#), waiving child care licensing fees.
- ✓ **Health care affordability for providers and access is a key issue** and we would like to work with the legislature to put forward solutions that recognize the importance of providers having health care when they have served as frontline workers to support other workers to keep the economy going.

We pledge to make tangible contributions to the struggle for racial justice. Read our [Statement](#) in Support of the Movement for Black Lives.

ELAA is convened by Children's Alliance. For more information: Adam Holdorf at ela@childrensalliance.org.

⇒ **Assure Ongoing, Direct Support to Families Through Home Visiting**

- ✓ Lawmakers should **maintain funding for voluntary, long-term home visiting services**, so families have the resources, information, and services to support their children's overall development.

⇒ **Keep Strong Preschool Supports in Place**

- ✓ Lawmakers should **increase provider rates by 7% in the [Early Childhood Education Assistance Program](#)**: quality pre-K that fights poverty with a two-generation approach.

⇒ **Support Fair Starts for Kids (Pass [HB 1213](#) & [SB 5237](#)) - Expand Access to Quality Early Learning Through Comprehensive Investments & Strategies**

Lawmakers must increase family access to quality early learning programs, including more care options for infants and toddlers, expand care options and early learning supports across the state and address child care deserts, particularly in rural areas, expand dual language learning, invest in culturally relevant and responsive care. Legislators must reflect the 'true cost of quality' in provider reimbursements, compensation, family eligibility, and affordability. Oversight should be driven by early learning experts including families and providers, backed by disaggregated data by race and ethnicity, and reflect recommendations from the Child Care Collaborative Task Force and reports on workforce compensation.

⇒ **Creating and Strengthening Early Learning Capital Facilities**

- ✓ **Invest \$40M for the Early Learning Facilities (ELF) and WA Early Learning Loan (WELL) Funds and critical technical project assistance.** Washington's early learners need equitable access to classrooms and space for preschool and childcare programs. Leveraging local and private funds, investing in facilities helps economic recovery in WA in two ways: Creating jobs for capital projects and ensuring future early learning space for children and working parents.
- ✓ **Support technical assistance for early learning capital facilities.** Pass [HB 1370](#).

ELAA Support Agenda. In addition to our primary legislative agenda items, ELAA also endorses these policies.

Support Early Learners by Supporting Their Families to be Economically Successful (Pass [HB 1297](#)/ [SB 5387](#))

- ✓ **Pass a Recovery Rebate through an updated Working Families Tax Credit.** Promote early childhood development, lift kids and families out of poverty, and promote kids' long-term educational success. Research shows that children in families with earned income tax credit are healthier, better supported as their families have extra resources to afford essentials and have better educational outcomes. The bill provides a base credit of \$500 that is phased out as income increases, with additional funds for households with more dependents. It also includes immigrant workers unjustly excluded from most tax credits, expanding support for working families to help assure their successful economic recovery and their children's development and resiliency.

Build Robust Support for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

- ✓ **Preserve current state investment in infant and early childhood mental health consultation (IECMH-C).** BIPOC children, especially Black boys, dual language learners, and children with disabilities experience disproportionately high levels of suspension and expulsion from early learning programs. Young children who live in families dealing with parental loss, substance abuse, mental illness, or exposure to trauma are at heightened risk of developing infant/early childhood mental health disorders. Research shows IECMH-C improves children's social-emotional wellbeing and reduces the likelihood of expulsion. The IECMH-C situated at Child Care Aware is funded at \$773,000/year. This investment is critical to equity in early learning outcomes.

We pledge to make tangible contributions to the struggle for racial justice. Read our [Statement](#) in Support of the Movement for Black Lives.

ELAA is convened by Children's Alliance. For more information: Adam Holdorf at ela@childrensalliance.org.

Continue 'Help Me Grow Pierce County' Prevention Pilot

- ✓ **Continue Help Me Grow Pierce County (HMG PC) pilot by continuing the state's investment at \$1.74 million.** HMG PC is a community-driven, resource and referral linkage system that connects young children and their families to appropriate services and community support, now in year 2 of implementation, and serves about 1,000 children ages 0 to 5 and expectant families per month. The pilot seeks to ensure that all families in Pierce County have the resources they need to thrive, with a goal outcome of preventing child welfare involvement.

Expand Preschool Options by Licensing Outdoor Preschools (Pass [SB 5151](#))

Address Equity in Education Naturally. Three years ago, the outdoor preschool licensing pilot passed with overwhelming support and clear recognition of the positive academic outcomes and proven mental health benefits of quality education outdoors. Now, after a successful pilot, Washington Department of Children, Youth and Families needs the authority to fully license these programs in Washington's early learning and childcare system. Licensing means increasing access to these beneficial programs and this is a critical step in addressing equity in education as well as equity in accessing the outdoors.

We pledge to make tangible contributions to the struggle for racial justice. Read our [Statement](#) in Support of the Movement for Black Lives.

ELAA is convened by Children's Alliance. For more information: Adam Holdorf at ela@childrensalliance.org.