



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE

LTE Guide



Letters to the editor (LTE) are important tools for advocates like you. They influence the press's coverage of issues facing Washington's kids and families; legislators read them; and they raise public awareness among fellow readers in your area.

THREE TIPS

- Keep it short: 150-200 words, or follow the guideline listed on the letters submission page;
- Speak your mind: the best letters come from the heart;
- Make it personal: how does access to quality child care affect you, your family or your community?

KEY MESSAGES

- When kids get high quality early experiences, they thrive in kindergarten, graduate on time, and have a greater chance of lifelong success. Yet Washington's public investment in children hasn't kept up with the science about brain development. In fact, state investments in kids birth to 5 equal just 1.1 percent of the state budget.
- Strong investments in child care, quality pre-K, and other birth-to-5 services can ensure that all children and their families are thriving. But racist disinvestment, segregation and exclusion have put barriers between children of color and their bright futures.
- Early learning matters for our families, our businesses and our future. Even before the pandemic, lack of affordable child care was costing \$6.5 billion annually in lost revenue and growth.
- Within the first few weeks of the pandemic, families began withdrawing their children from care, radically dropping enrollment across the state. The resulting loss of tuition revenue and the increased cost of operations have put an enormous financial strain on the early learning sector. For reasons related to enrollment, revenue loss, and concerns about exposure, over 1,000 programs have closed across the state and many have furloughed or laid off staff.
- The economics of running a child care business simply do not pencil out when overhead increases and revenue falls significantly. The child care deserts in our state are in danger of turning into child care wastelands.
- Two thirds of Hispanic/Latino children and 63% of Black children lived in child care deserts before COVID-19. Early learning program closures have further reduced access to learning opportunities for BIPOC children of low-wage, essential workers.
- The need is stronger than ever for quality, culturally and linguistically relevant early learning to protect communities and dismantle barriers to opportunity. The Fair Start for Kids Act takes strong steps to address affordability, access and the economic crisis.

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Editor

Early learning matters for our families, our businesses and our future. Even before the pandemic, lack of affordable child care was costing \$6.5 billion annually in lost revenue and growth.

[Insert one or two sentences about why access to/funding for child care providers matter to you]

This legislative session, our lawmakers should pass and fund the Fair Start for Kids Act and expand access to early learning for Washington families.

Sincerely

Full name, address, phone, e-mail [the publication will only print your name and city/town of residence]

WHERE TO SEND YOUR LETTER

Seattle and King County:

Seattle Times: letters@seattletimes.com

Reporter publications: letters may be submitted to member newspapers throughout western Washington

NW Asian Weekly

International Examiner

Pierce, Thurston, Lewis County:

News Tribune (Tacoma)

Tacoma Weekly

Olympian

Centralia Chronicle

Snohomish County and NW Washington:

The Herald (Everett): letters@heraldnet.com

Whidbey News-Times

North County Outlook (Marysville, Arlington)

Stanwood Camano News

Bellingham Herald

Central and Eastern Washington:

Spokane Spokesman-Review

The Inlander

Black Lens

Yakima Herald Republic

Walla Walla Union-Bulletin

Kitsap & Olympic Peninsula:

Kitsap Sun

Peninsula Daily News

Port Townsend Leader: news@ptleader.com

Southwest Washington and Pacific Coast:

The Daily News (Longview)

The Reflector (Battle Ground)

The Columbian (Vancouver)

Chinook Observer (Long Beach)