



CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE
A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts: Adam Hyla, Children's Alliance, (206) 324-0340 x18, adam@childrensalliance.org
Leslie Dozono, Early Learning Action Alliance, (206) 324-0340 x20; leslie@childrensalliance.org
Kelly Phanco, First 5 FUNdamentals of Pierce County, (253) 597-6232; kelly@first5fundamentals.org

Local lawmakers awarded for drawing the future for kids

Tacoma (Thursday, August 30, 2012) – First 5 FUNdamentals and the Early Learning Action Alliance are proud to recognize Sen. Mike Carrell (28th – Lakewood), Sen. Debbie Regala (27th – Tacoma) and Rep. Bruce Dammeier (25th – Puyallup) for their outstanding work in helping more children access early learning opportunities. Next Wednesday, Sept. 5, each will be presented with a Crayon Award.

“The Crayon Awards provide an excellent opportunity to honor legislators who work hard on behalf of young children,” said Pierce County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist. “Investing in education, and early learning in particular, pays off with children who will grow up and make positive contributions to our communities.”

Age birth to 5 is a critical time to build the mental architecture that children rely on for the rest of their lives. Yet more than half of all children starting kindergarten this fall have not had the opportunities they need to be ready for school.

“Research shows that the achievement gap is in place by age three,” says Kelly Phanco, Executive Director of First 5 FUNdamentals. “The role of legislators is critical in developing policies that help children be successful when they start school.”

When: Wed., Sept. 5, 4-5 p.m.

***SPECIAL PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:

Legislators are presented with Crayon Awards from 4:20 to 5 p.m. ***

Where: Children's Museum of Tacoma ([1501 Pacific Avenue, Tacoma](http://www.childrensmuseum.org))

Who: Sen. Mike Carrell (28th – Lakewood) receives a Bronze Crayon Award

Sen. Debbie Regala (27th – Tacoma) receives a Silver Crayon Award

Rep. Bruce Dammeier (25th – Puyallup) receives a Silver Crayon Award

More on the Crayon Awards: Over the next two months, 19 state legislators across Washington are receiving Crayon Awards for their outstanding work in helping more

children access early learning opportunities in the past two years: from protecting state investments in programs, to advocating for policy changes that increase the continuity of care for children. All 19 legislators awarded understand the value of investing in the first five years of a child's life. Quality early learning during this time influences experiences in school, at work, with their families and in their communities.

Three types of awards are given: Gold, Silver and Bronze Crayon Awards. Gold Crayon Award recipients are leaders who spearhead and champion efforts in early learning. Silver Crayon Award recipients are steadfast advocates who lend their voices and cast their votes for early learning issues. Recipients of the Bronze Crayon Award demonstrate promise as growing early learning leaders; we count on their rising support. See a [full list](#) of awardees.

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Under the guiding vision that all Pierce County children start school ready to succeed, First 5 FUNDamentals builds and sustains an integrated early learning system of community partners and organizations to support our young children and their families. [Learn more.](#)

Convened by the Children's Alliance, the Early Learning Action Alliance (ELAA) is a statewide coalition of organizations representing a diverse array of Washington nonprofits, professional associations, businesses and industries united by the belief that all children deserve to be prepared for school and a bright future. [Learn more.](#)