



Memorandum

TO: SATPAL SIDHU, COUNTY EXECUTIVE

FROM: Ann Beck, Community Health and Human Services Manager,
and Sarah Simpson, Child & Family Programs Supervisor

DATE: JUNE 9, 2023

RE: UPDATE ON THE HEALTHY CHILDREN'S FUND IMPLEMENTATION

Whatcom County Health & Community Services (WCHCS) staff will present a brief update on the implementation of the Healthy Children's Fund (HCF).

Last fall, voters in Whatcom County approved Proposition 5, the Healthy Children's Fund, a property tax measure estimated to raise approximately \$9.98M each year for 10 years, for investments in early learning and care and vulnerable families.

The Healthy Children's Fund Implementation Plan, Resolution 2023-007, was approved by Whatcom County Council on March 21, 2023. Since that time, WCHCS has hired several related staff positions, formed the Implementation Team, begun discussing policies and procedures with other partner departments, and hired a consultant with expertise in early learning & care policy design.

As stated in the Implementation Plan, the HCF Implementation Team includes representatives from various community partners, including the Child & Family Well-Being Task Force, Whatcom Child Care Coalition, Healthy Whatcom, and those with lived experience.

The HCF Implementation Team has been considering questions such as:

- Which strategies should be addressed first
- How can the HCF equitably and innovatively distribute funding, so it reaches the children and families with the most need
- How to best engage with and communicate with the community?

The Implementation Team has identified the following strategies as highly impactful and feasible to move forward quickly. Work will be prioritized to further the following strategies immediately:



- Strategy 3: Improve access to early learning & care through subsidies that reduce the cost of programs for children from families which are cost-burdened.
- Strategy 5: Create regional early learning & care hubs that include shared administrative services, co-located early learning and other services for children and families, and support for smaller providers in the County (i.e. the “hub and spoke model”).
- Strategy 6: Support innovative approaches to meet various Healthy Children’s Fund goals related to Early Learning & Care.
- Strategy 8: Develop and/or expand resources and programs for families who disproportionately experience housing instability.
- Strategy 9: Expand and enhance early parenting supports.
- Technical Assistance: Identifying technical assistance needs for each strategy (for instance grant-writing support, proposal design, and transformational change workshops.)

Whatcom County Health and Community Services will be bringing forward a supplemental budget request to support this work in the coming months. Whatcom County Health and Community Services staff look forward to working with you and the Council in further refining the Healthy Children’s Fund Implementation and in partnering to execute the HCF deliverables.

Please call Ann Beck and Sarah Simpson at 360-778-6000 if there are any questions. Thank you.