



Memorandum

TO: Satpal Sidhu, County Executive
FROM: Erika Lautenbach, Director
RE: Aha! Childcare & Family Learning Center – Healthy Children’s Fund Innovative Services Contract
DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 2025

Attached is a contract between Whatcom County and Aha! Childcare & Family Learning Center for your review and signature.

▪ **Background and Purpose**

This contract increases kindergarten readiness for children enrolled at a licensed childcare facility in Ferndale. This facility serves primarily low-income (at or below 85% State Median Income) and vulnerable families with approximately 74% of enrolled children requiring additional health and supportive services beyond what is typically needed. Funding will be used, as follows:

- Train staff in sign language and purchase related materials in an effort to more effectively communicate with children learning to communicate, non-verbal children, and children with special needs in order to increase kindergarten readiness.
- Subcontract behavioral health, speech pathology, and nutrition services so that children can access these critical services while in the childcare facility and better serve working families.
- Purchase an additional refrigerator/freezer to safely store food bank deliveries for families who are not able to access the food bank resources due to their working hours.
- Support participation of enrolled children in the Soccerstars of Greater Whatcom Program to support the development of children’s social, emotional and gross motor skills in order to increase kindergarten readiness.
- Hire a part-time Assessment Director to conduct assessments and collaborate with kindergarten teachers to help children transition into the school system and increase kindergarten readiness.

This contract is awarded as a result of RFP 24-66 and aligns with the Healthy Children’s Fund Implementation Plan’s Strategy Six, to support innovative approaches to meet various goals related to Early Learning and Care.

▪ **Funding Amount and Source**

Funding for this contract, in an amount not to exceed \$106,773, is provided by the Healthy Children’s Fund. These funds are included in the 2025 budget. Council authorization is required per WCC 3.08.100, as funding for this contract exceeds \$40,000.

Please contact Sarah Simpson, Children and Family Programs Supervisor at 360-410-2400 (SSimpson@co.whatcom.wa.us) if you have any questions.

Encl.