

Date: 5.24.22

To: Whatcom County Council
council@co.whatcom.wa.us

Cc: Executive Satpal Sidhu
ssidhu@co.whatcom.wa.us

From: Child & Family Well-Being Task Force
Re: The Healthy Children and Families Fund

We write to express enthusiastic support for the Healthy Children's Fund. It is our sincere hope that you pass the ordinance before you, allowing the voters of Whatcom County the chance to establish the fund through the general election in November.

- There are only about half as many child care slots in our community as are needed for children with parents who work full-time¹,
- Children in our community are mistreated at much higher rates than in other parts of the state²,
- An alarming number of families battle housing instability³,
- And less than half of our children arrive ready to learn on their first day of kindergarten⁴.

These are complex and interconnected problems that require well-resourced solutions. And you already knew that. That's why in the establishing ordinance for this task force you directed us to, "develop and establish methods to increase and stabilize funding streams for child and family programs, services, and infrastructure."⁵

This fund aligns well with our goals, and we are ready and eager to play the reporting role assigned to us in the ordinance. There is a long and strong desire to make it easier to raise a family in our community, but Whatcom has lacked the flexibility of sustained, locally-controlled dollars. This fund would provide that critical missing ingredient, resourcing the addition of new capacity, attracting even more outside funds to our community, and catalyzing innovation. The combination of accountability measures included in this ordinance gives us confidence that the fund will help many families from its very first day and only grow in its effectiveness over time.

Thank you for saying yes to kids!

Best Wishes,
The Child & Family Well-Being Task Force

¹ Child Care Aware and Opportunity Council (2019). [Child Care Supply, Demand, and Cost in Whatcom County](#).

² Partners for Our Children (2020). [Focus on Whatcom County](#).

³ Whatcom County Health Department (2020), [A Home for Everyone: Whatcom County Coalition to End Homelessness Annual Report](#).

⁴ Whatcom County Health Department (2020), [Whatcom Working Toward Well-Being](#), Updated January 2020.

⁵ Whatcom County Council (2020), [Ordinance creating a Child and Family Well-Being Task Force](#).