



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

May 23, 2022

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

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

Re: The Healthy Children and Families Fund

Dear Whatcom County Councilmembers,

Thank you for your consideration for committing to support young children and their families through making investments in child care and early learning. At the Y, strengthening the foundations of community is our cause. Every day, we work side-by-side with our neighbors to make sure that everyone, regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive. The YMCA believes every child should have the opportunity to reach their fullest potential, and quality early learning is critical to help children be prepared for school and foster a desire for lifelong learning.

The Whatcom Family YMCA has been providing early learning and childcare for over 30 years. We currently have two all day Early Learning Centers with a third opening this summer to support Lydia Place's Heart House. The Y also provides after school care at 19 schools, covering four school districts, serving over 360 children. These programs ensure parents and caregivers have access to quality child care and early learning, which is instrumental to supporting careers and build strong families.

We are all very aware for the shortage of available childcare slots in Whatcom County. One of the main reasons is that childcare is a business of the heart—not one of financial reward. Making investments to expand comes at a significant risk; the high amount of capital needed, the difficulty in recruiting and maintaining staff to run quality programs, the high cost to meet strict licensing requirements, and the need to pay more to the childcare staff, which is greatly deserved. Unfortunately, these high costs have to be passed along, thus childcare is a leading cost to many young families in Whatcom County.

Early Learning is vitally important to prepare children for school and a life of success. Opportunities to learn through play in a safe environment with nurturing adults are crucial for children. The Y is committed to serving the most vulnerable children in our community through providing financial support and scholarships.

Investments in childcare and early learning will help prepare our kids for school, will support young working parents, and ultimately help build strong families in our community. Therefore, I ask you to consider supporting the Healthy Children and Families Fund and ask that County Council unanimously approve the resolution to advance it to a public vote.

Thank you for your support of children and families in our community.

Bill Ziels  
CEO, Whatcom Family YMCA