

Healthy Children’s Fund Amendment Recommendation

March 2023

The Whatcom County Executive’s Office recommends adding the following strategy to the Healthy Children’s Fund Implementation Plan. This additional strategy provides clarity around capital investments in early learning and provides flexibility for future decision-making by Council. The absence of such a strategy may create concerns associated with public expectations that the Implementation Plan for the first two years should include significant investments in new facilities. Inclusion of this strategy would show how the plan complements other investments which have already begun.

Strategy 0: Provide funds for mid-size and/or large capital projects to acquire, build new, expand existing, or re-purpose buildings to increase early learning & care slots in a mixed-delivery system.	
Focus Areas	Early Learning & Care (ELC): Affordable & Accessible
Objectives	Increase early learning & care slots by expanding facilities in a variety of program models across the county, including rural locations, to ensure slots are accessible to underserved populations.
Details	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support classrooms to increase the number of early learning & care slots, paying particular attention to age groups and areas of the county most in demand, through funding for facility startup or expansion. ● Build new, acquire, expand existing, or re-purpose buildings for child care. This could involve buying land, building new early learning & care facilities, and/or renovating current facilities to reduce the overall cost of running an early learning & care facility. ● Investments should complement other opportunities for facility improvements.
How we will measure our success	<p>Headline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Early learning & care slots per 100 infants, toddlers, and preschoolers. <p>Secondary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Number of parents/caregivers who have a demand for early learning & care report that they have access. ● The number of early learning & care providers that report having a waitlist. <p><i>All measures are disaggregated by race, income, and geography as data is available.</i></p>
Opportunities to Leverage Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure providers can apply for and receive Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). capital and licensed-family home grants.
Cost estimate for years 1 & 2*	HCF: \$0 / ARPA: \$5 million+

*This strategy is funded through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). These estimates are based on current data and understanding and may shift as new information emerges and circumstances change. Evaluators will work with WCHCS to accurately reflect how ARPA spending has complemented HCF outcomes.