

Supplement:

Letters received in support for
Child and Family Action Plan



BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Director

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Executive Assistant

January 21, 2020

Whatcom County Council

Cc: Executive Satphal Sidhu

Greetings,

The Bellingham Public Schools Foundation makes *a collective commitment to Bellingham's children - we will empower every child to discover and develop a passion, contribute to their community, and achieve a fulfilling and productive life.* Today we honor our commitment to Bellingham's children by using our voice to advocate for a renewed focus and tangible supports at our county level. Please accept this letter as a show of support for those who envision a future in which all children are safe, healthy and ready to learn, and in which families are strong, stable, supported and welcomed by our community as a place to live, learn, work and play. We ask that you accept the recommendations put forth in the child action plan and allocate resources to implement the changes. We look forward to actively partnering to make this vision a reality.

Every day we see families in crisis. Students that show up hungry, families have been severed, and every day educators teach through these traumas. The Bellingham Public Schools Foundation strives to equalize opportunity and to support students and families in crisis, helping every student to meet their unique potential.

But none of that can solve the ongoing, systemic inequities that lead to the disparities children experience as they navigate towards graduation. A recent district-wide survey highlighted what we see in classrooms every day, that families need additional behavioral health supports for their children. That the supports aren't there to ensure they can live up to their potential.

We support the Child and Family Action Plan because Whatcom County needs a county-wide approach to child and family well being that includes clear strategies to address key concerns in our community and that gives all children access to those social, emotional and academic skills that are essential to success. Student success in the classroom must be a piece of a larger county-wide focus on health and wellness of children and families and we support a broad community effort to ensure:

- 1) Availability of effective early learning within the context of full day childcare so that parents may work or pursue their education.
- 2) Safe, stable and affordable housing is available for families and our workers;
- 3) Behavioral health services are available and affordable for children and their families.

We support the efforts of the Health Board, the Health Department and the Generations Forward Coalition in their creation of the Child and Family Action plan, and its adoption by our local governments.

Sincerely,

Kim Lund | Executive Director

[Type here]



**BELLINGHAM
WHATCOM COUNTY
HOUSING AUTHORITIES**

Office: 208 Unity Street – Lower Level • Bellingham

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 9701 • Bellingham, WA 98227-9701

January 24, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members,

The Bellingham and Whatcom County Housing Authorities fully support the Child and Family Action Plan that you will be considering at your February 4, 2020 meeting. The objectives of the Child and Family Action Plan are well aligned with our mission of offering opportunities for people to thrive by ensuring access to quality, affordable homes. We encourage you to adopt the Plan.

In addition to access to quality, affordable health care, the health of our neighbors and community depends on a range of resources and services that must be available throughout our community in order to create the conditions for health. We share the vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn, families are strong, stable, and supported from the start, and communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work, and play.

Whatcom County's children and families cannot thrive without the services and resources prioritized in the Child and Family Action Plan: safe and stable housing; safe, accessible childcare and early learning opportunities; and accessible behavioral health services for children and their families. We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the vision set forth in the Plan a reality.

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brien Thane
Executive Director/CEO



BELLINGHAM REGIONAL

CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

January 23, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members,

I am writing to enthusiastically endorse the Child and Family Action Plan you will be considering for adoption at your February 4, 2020 meeting.

As the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, our mission and 2020 policy agenda are strongly aligned with the objectives of the Child and Family Action Plan. We realize that the health of the people and communities we serve depends not only on access to quality, affordable health care but also on the resources and services available throughout our community that create the conditions for health. We share the vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn, families are strong, stable, and supported from the start, and communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work, and play.

Whatcom County's children and families cannot thrive without the services and resources prioritized in the Child and Family Action Plan:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe, accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

As an organization, we have been working for years to build the conversation regarding affordable and availability housing, specifically workforce housing, and childcare that is also both affordable and available. We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the vision set forth in the Plan a reality.

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,

Guy Occhiogrosso
President/CEO
Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce



INTERFAITH COALITION

Partners in faith. Changing lives.

January 13, 2020

Whatcom County Public Health Advisory Board
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 108
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Public Health Advisory Board Members,

I am writing to whole-heartedly endorse the Child and Family Action Plan you will be considering for adoption at your February 4, 2020 meeting.

At Interfaith Coalition, our vision of a community of many faiths working together to eliminate homelessness and poverty in Whatcom County is aligned with the objectives of the Child and Family Action Plan. We have established resources that, along with our many remarkable community partners, can help achieve the desired results of ensuring children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn, families are strong, stable, and supported from the start, and communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work and play.

Whatcom County's children and families will have the opportunity to thrive when they have access to the services and resources prioritized in the Child and Family Action Plan:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe, accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our many dedicated community partners to help build the resilient community set forth in the Plan.

Thank you for your work, time, and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Laura Harker, Executive Director

January 18, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members and County Executive,

Oh behalf of Lydia Place, I am writing to enthusiastically support the Child and Family Action Plan and its recommendations.

Lydia Place has been serving families with children in Whatcom County for 30 years. Our mission is to disrupt the cycle of homelessness for current and future generations. We recognize that in order to address the systemic issues of poverty, we must take bold action as a community and put the health and wellbeing of children at the front and center of our work. We feel the recommendations of the Child and Family Action Plan are a great first step in doing just that.

The data tells us that our children here in Whatcom County are not getting their basic needs met. Only 50% enter school ready to learn, we have 4 childcare spots for every 10 children, rates of child abuse and neglect are higher than the state average, and the mental health of our teens is steadily declining. Roughly half of those who live here cannot afford to do so and homeless continues to rise. These are just a few of the indicators that tell us we are headed in the wrong direction. At Lydia Place, we recognize that the health of a community begins with the health of the children who call it home. They are the workforce, business owners, teachers, volunteers, and neighbors of tomorrow. The future health of Whatcom County depends on the availability of critical services and basic needs. As such, Lydia Place strongly supports the Plan's focus on:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe, accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

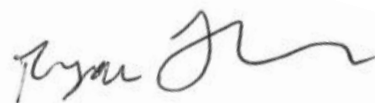
We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the vision set forth in the Plan a reality.

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,



Emily O'Connor
Executive Director



Ryan Thrasher
Board President

January 17, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members,

I am writing to extend Opportunity Council's support for the goals outlined in the Child and Family Action Plan that you will be considering for adoption at your February 4, 2020 meeting. We share the Plan's vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn; families are strong, stable, and supported; and communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work, and play.

Opportunity Council's mission aligns with the objectives of the Plan, and we look forward to continuing to contribute to the action areas prioritized in the Plan:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe, accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

Additionally, we support the Plan's commitment to invest new resources to identify gaps and innovative prevention strategies and bring to scale the current work being done across sectors providing services for families and children.

We look forward to the opportunity to support this work through collaboration with you and our community.

Community Action

A Community Action Agency
serving Whatcom, Island and
San Juan Counties since 1965

Whatcom County
1111 Cornwall Ave., Suite C
Bellingham, WA 98225
(360) 734-5121
(800) 649-5121
Fax (360) 671-0541

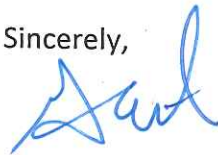
Island County
1791 NE 1st Ave.
P.O. Box 922
Oak Harbor, WA 98277
(360) 679-6577
(800) 317-5427
Fax (360) 679-2440

San Juan County
(800) 649-5121

www.oppeco.org

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,



Greg Winter
Executive Director

January 20, 2020

Whatcom County Council acting as Health Board

Cc: County Executive Satpal Sidhu

Dear Health Board,

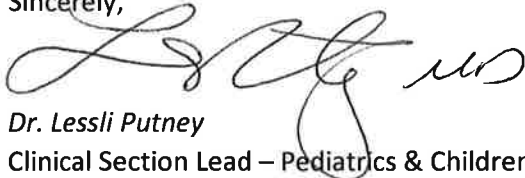
Few things are as important as building family resilience and investing in early childhood development. As pediatricians, we see the ramifications when this doesn't happen, and we see the difference it makes in healthy child and youth development when these supports exist in community. We share in the vision for a future in which all children are safe, healthy and ready to learn, and in which families are strong, stable, supported and welcomed by our community as a place to live, learn, work and play. We applaud your commitment to placing child and family well-being as a top priority county concern and urge you to carefully consider the recommendations put forward in the Whatcom Working on Well-Being: Child and Family Action Plan.

We support a broad community effort to ensure that Whatcom County children and families can thrive with the services and resources prioritized for action in the Child and Family Action Plan, including:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe and accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

We support the efforts of the Health Board, the Health Department and Generations Forward in their creation of the Child and Family Action plan and its adoption by our local governments. We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and collaborate with you and other community partners to bring this vision to reality.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lessli Putney

Clinical Section Lead – Pediatrics & Children's Therapy

On behalf of

PeaceHealth Pediatrics Clinic

PeaceHealth Medical Group Pediatrics
4545 Cordata Parkway
Bellingham, WA 98225

MEDICAL CLINICS

Aberdeen
 Battle Ground
 Bellevue
 Bellingham
 Burien
 Concrete
 Des Moines
 Elma
 Everett
 Everson
 Federal Way
 Kent
 Lacey
 Lakewood
 Marysville
 Monroe
 Mt. Vernon
 Ocean Shores
 Olympia
 Puyallup
 Seattle
 Tacoma
 Vancouver
 Yelm

DENTAL CLINICS

Aberdeen
 Bellevue
 Bellingham
 Burien
 Des Moines
 Federal Way
 Everett
 Lacey
 Marysville
 Mt. Vernon
 Monroe
 Oak Harbor
 Ocean Shores
 Olympia
 Port Angeles
 Puyallup
 Seattle
 Tacoma
 Vancouver
 Yelm

**INPATIENT
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

Bellingham
 Seattle
 Tacoma

**OUTPATIENT
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH**

Aberdeen
 Anacortes
 Battle Ground
 Bellevue
 Bellingham
 Des Moines
 Everett
 Federal Way
 Gig Harbor
 Kelso
 Kent
 Lynnwood
 Monroe
 Mt. Vernon
 Oak Harbor
 Puyallup
 Seattle
 Tacoma
 Tumwater
 Vancouver
 Yelm

PHARMACY

Bellevue
 Concrete
 Des Moines
 Federal Way
 Everett
 Mt. Vernon
 Ocean Shores
 Olympia
 Seattle
 Tacoma
 Vancouver

OTHER

Administration
 Cannon House
 Care Management
 Child Dev. Center
 Comm. Care Center
 Community Services
 Educational Services
 Home Care
 Home Health
 Homeless Services
 Housing
 KDNA & KKMO Radio
 Managed Care
 MSS & WIC
 Promotores/as Program



Sea Mar

Community Health Centers

Clinica de la Comunidad

Exceptional service. Every person. Every time.

Proudly serving the community since 1978

ADMINISTRATION | 1040 S. HENDERSON ST. | SEATTLE, WA | 98108 | 206.763.5277

January 16, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
 311 Grand Ave, Suite 105
 Bellingham, WA 98225

RE: CHILD AND FAMILY ACTION PLAN

Dear Board of Health Members,

I am writing to express Sea Mar Community Health Center's endorsement of the Child and Family Action Plan that is being considered for adoption at the February 4, 2020 meeting.

Sea Mar, founded in 1978, is a community-based organization committed to providing quality, comprehensive health, human, housing, educational and cultural services to diverse communities, specializing in service to Latinos in Washington state. We realize that the health of the people and communities we serve depend not only on access to quality, affordable health care but also on the resources and services available throughout our community that create the conditions for health. We serve the vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy and ready to learn, families are strong, stable and supported from the start, and communities are welcoming and supportive for children and families to live, learn, work and play.

Whatcom County's children and families cannot thrive without the services and resources prioritized in the Child and Family Action Plan:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe, accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the vision set forth in the Plan a reality.

Sincerely,

Mary Bartolo
 Deputy Director

United Way of Whatcom County

1500 Cornwall Ave Ste 203
Bellingham WA 98225-4522
tel 360.733.8670
fax 360.733.8674

unitedwaywhatcom.org



January 23, 2020

Whatcom County Council
Cc: Executive Satphal Sidhu

Greetings,

United Way of Whatcom County fights for the financial stability of every person in our community. No matter the obstacles. No matter the odds. We surround Whatcom County's most critical problems. And we fight. According to the latest ALICE Report, 35% of households with children do not have the financial resources to meet their basic needs. We are using our voices to advocate that our county government increase efforts to make our community more resilient and our families more financially stable.

Since 2017, the United Way of Whatcom County has been uniting partners behind a single-issue focus to combine resources to make a more significant impact on financial stability. Based on the evidence identifying the lack of child care as a significant barrier, we launched a child care initiative that has brought together local leaders within the youth serving community to forge a pathway towards a more sustainable child care landscape in which all children have easy access to affordable, high-quality child care and early learning options. More than 30 individuals from around 20 businesses and organizations have collaborated to draft a childcare action plan that aligns with state efforts to incentivize employer-supported childcare and improve childcare access and affordability for employees.

In recent months, urgent needs have arisen to address a potential loss of 500+ childcare slots in our county. While these needs are now urgent, they are not new, nor are they specific to circumstances related to Kids World. We know that the childcare industry across the state is not stable, that the childcare business is precarious and leaves families and individuals in a vulnerable position. In fact, the current system at times disincentivizes parents and caregivers to access education or join the workforce, furthering disparities in opportunities. It will take a collaborative and proactive approach to addressing this significant community need. Many other communities have modeled this for us. It is our turn to transform this into a reality.

Representatives from the childcare initiative have worked alongside county leaders to inform and develop a child action plan, presented herein. **We ask that you adopt these changes and allocate resources to work alongside community leaders actively pursuing a future in which all children are safe, healthy and ready to learn, and in which families are strong, stable, supported and welcomed by our community as a place to live, learn, work and play.**

We support the efforts of the Health Board, the Health Department and the Generations Forward Coalition in their creation of the Child and Family Action plan, and its adoption by our local governments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Theisen", is written over a horizontal line.

Peter Theisen
President/CEO



January 6, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members,

I am writing to enthusiastically endorse the Child and Family Action Plan you will be considering for adoption at your February 4, 2020 meeting.

As a community health center, our mission is strongly aligned with the objectives of the Child and Family Action Plan. Prevention and early intervention are at the core of our work. We realize that the health of the people and communities we serve depends not only on access to quality, affordable health care but also on the resources and services available throughout our community that create the conditions for health. We share the vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn, families are strong, stable, and supported from the start, and communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work, and play.

Whatcom County's children and families cannot thrive without the services and resources prioritized in the Child and Family Action Plan:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe, accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the vision set forth in the Plan a reality.

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Desmond Skubi", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Desmond Skubi
Chief Executive Officer

Whatcom County Coalition to End Homelessness

January 22nd, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members and County Executive,

As the Chair of the Whatcom County Coalition to End Homelessness, I am writing to express the Coalition Steering Committee's support of the Child and Family Action Plan. The Coalition is dedicated to combatting homelessness in Whatcom County through action and advocacy. We share the vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn, families are strong, stable, and supported from the start, and communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work, and play.

As a Steering Committee, we are particularly supportive of the Plan's emphasis on targeted action to increase housing access and reduce homelessness. As a homeless response system, we continue to see an increasing need for rental subsidy, case management, affordable housing units, childcare, and behavioral health supports. We welcome a focus on identifying new sources of revenue to address the gaps in services.

We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the vision set forth in the Plan a reality.

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Parker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" and last name "Parker" clearly distinguishable.

Mike Parker, Coalition Chair



building community together so youth and families thrive

January 23, 2020

Whatcom County Council

Cc: Executive Satpal Sidhu

Dear Executive Satpal and County Council:

Whatcom Family and Community Network recognizes the importance of our communities joining together to raise family and child hope and resilience across all stages, but especially during the years of early childhood development. The earlier we act, the more prevention happens.

We envision a future in which all children are safe, healthy and ready to learn, and in which families are strong, stable, supported and welcomed by our community as a place to live, learn, work and play. We imagine Whatcom youth and families thriving despite facing adversity—social, environmental or otherwise.

We support a broad community effort to ensure:

- 1) Availability of effective early learning within the context of full day childcare so that parents may work or pursue their education.
- 2) Safe, stable and affordable housing is available for families and our workers;
- 3) Behavioral health and prevention services are available and affordable for children and their families.

We support our local governments to integrate consideration for children and families in strategic planning, and to have all relevant departments view initiatives and decisions through a lens of the same, while supporting neighborhoods in building community connections and resilience.

We support the efforts of the Whatcom County Health Board, the Health Department and Generations Forward in their creation of the Child and Family Action plan, and its adoption by our local governments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shane Steger".

Shane Steger, President

On behalf of

Whatcom Family & Community Network

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristi Slette".

Kristi Slette, Executive Director

January 9, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members and County Executive,

On behalf of the Whatcom County Housing Advisory Committee (WCHAC), I am writing to express our Committee's support of the Child and Family Action Plan. The WCHAC is committed to advancing County strategies that address the shortage of affordable homes in our community and to identifying priorities for County action that reduce homelessness. We share the vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn, where families are strong, stable, and supported from the start, and where communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work, and play.

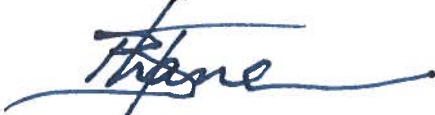
We would like to emphasize the following:

- WCHAC recognizes that safe, stable, affordable homes are critical to the health and wellbeing of children and families, and we strongly support the Plan's recommendations for expanded support for vulnerable families with children and those of us experiencing homelessness.
- WCHAC recognizes that the Plan embraces a shift in strategy from crisis response to add more efforts around prevention, and from a public health perspective, we strongly support this approach.
- WCHAC recognizes that Whatcom County's children and families cannot thrive without the services and resources described in the Child and Family Action Plan, and we support the Plan's prioritization of safe and stable housing, accessible child care and early learning opportunities, and accessible behavioral health services for children and their families.
- WCHAC supports the identification of new revenue sources to expand services to address child and family wellbeing and to expand the supply of homes people can afford.
- WCHAC wants to emphasize that reducing or eliminating existing programs and funding would be counterproductive and not supported by the WCHAC.
- WCHAC stands ready to advise and support the implementation of the Plan as it pertains to safe, stable, affordable homes, and we ask that you utilize the WCHAC as a resource in the next phase of Plan implementation.

We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the Plan's vision a reality.

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brien Thane", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brien Thane, Chair



January 8, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members,

I am writing to enthusiastically support the Child and Family Action Plan you will be considering for adoption at your February 4, 2020 meeting.

At Whatcom Housing Alliance, we realize that the health of the people and communities we live and work in depends on the resources and services available throughout our community that create the conditions for health. For the Whatcom Housing Alliance, this begins with safe, stable housing that is affordable to all and available in all neighborhoods. We share the vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn, families are strong, stable, and supported from the start, and communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work, and play.

Whatcom County's children and families cannot thrive without the services and resources prioritized in the Child and Family Action Plan:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe, accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the vision set forth in the Plan a reality.

Thank you for your work and consideration.
Sincerely,

Steering Committee

Whatcom Housing Alliance



January 8, 2020

Whatcom County Board of Health
311 Grand Avenue, Suite 105
Bellingham, WA 98225

Dear Board of Health Members,

I am writing to express support for the Child and Family Action Plan you will be considering for adoption at your February 4, 2020 meeting.

At Whatcom Women in Business, we realize that the health of the people and communities we live and work in depends on the resources and services available throughout our community that create the conditions for health. We share the vision of a community where all children are safe, healthy, and ready to learn, families are strong, stable, and supported from the start, and communities are welcoming and supportive places for children and families to live, learn, work, and play.

Whatcom County's children and families cannot thrive without the services and resources prioritized in the Child and Family Action Plan:

- Safe and stable housing
- Safe, accessible child care and early learning opportunities
- Accessible behavioral health services for children and their families

We look forward to the opportunity to support this work and to collaborate with you and our community partners to make the vision set forth in the Plan a reality.

Thank you for your work and consideration.

Sincerely,

Shu-Ling Hergenbahn Zhao

Shu-Ling Hergenbahn Zhao
President, WWIB