

Partners for Our Children

2021 Washington state policy priorities

IN 2021, PARTNERS FOR OUR CHILDREN (P4C) WILL ELEVATE EQUITY IN ALL POLICIES. WE WILL PROMOTE SERVICES AND SUPPORTS THAT REMEDY HISTORICAL INEQUITIES AND THEIR IMPACT. WE ENVISION A WASHINGTON IN WHICH ALL PARENTS AND CHILDREN THRIVE.

Reimagine Child Welfare

- Address historical inequities and their impact and mitigate family separation: Modify our standards for removal, relative placement policies, and reasonable efforts laws
- Improve Family Time (aka Parent-Child Visitation): Require that a case be made to the court for supervised visits and ensure that training for providers meet quality standards
- Support Kinship Caregivers: Establish a foster care license that better meets their needs
- Expand legal representation for children and youth: Promote the appointment of an attorney for all children and youth in the dependency system
- Increase the availability of housing and substance use disorder (SUD) treatment: Better ensure that parents have access to housing and treatment services that allow the family to stay together

Address Poverty

- Protect: The TANF grant and other services and supports that address poverty
- Codify TANF Policy Changes: Make permanent policy changes made during the pandemic including time limit extensions, WorkFirst exceptions for good cause, suspension of the sanction process, and allowing the required orientation to be conducted by telephone
- Address the outdated needs standard: Codify a new and more current needs standard

Improve Access to Behavioral Health Services for Children and Youth

- Expand access and availability of Behavioral Health (BH) Services: Support recommendations from the Children/Youth Behavioral Health Workgroup, including (but not limited to) restore the rate increase, fund the Referral Assist Line, establish a BH teaching clinic rate, create a BH apprenticeship program, and require diversity, equity and inclusion training for providers.

Create a Quality and Accessible Early Learning System

- Ensure the availability of early parent supports: Maintain and expand the availability of effective home visiting programs
- Address the needs of children and families birth to five: Support proposals to develop a quality comprehensive early learning system and the revenue to ensure its viability

Address the Digital Divide

- Ensure access for all Washingtonians: Support legislation and funding that addresses broadband access, availability of devices, digital navigation, and other technology related needs.

PARTNERS FOR OUR CHILDREN ALSO SUPPORTS THE PRIORITIES OF

For more information, please contact Laurie Lippold, Policy Director: Laurielippold@gmail.com or 206-718-5853

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OTHER ORGANIZAITONS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO:

The Child Welfare Advocacy Coalition (CWAC):

Priorities endorsed by CWAC focus on preventing children and families from ever having contact with the child welfare system, improving the system for those who do have contact, achieving permanency for children and youth, and ensuring successful transitions out of the system and into adulthood.

WA Low-Income Housing Alliance (WLIHA):

The focus of the WLIHA is on improving access to safe, affordable housing for individuals and families. The availability of housing is critical to ensuring that families are not separated, and, if they are, can be reunified as quickly as possible.