



## CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

FEBRUARY 28<sup>TH</sup>, 2022

**Present:** Alicia Hanning, Annie Taylor, Beverly Porter, Brian Nelson, Carol Frazey, Debbie Ahl, Escarleth DeLeon, Gregory Hansen, Jamie Desmul, Jed Holmes, Jen Wright, Keith Montoya, Komal Shah, Mary Sewright, Melissa Isenhardt, Mike Ford, Monica Koller, Ray Deck, Sativa Robertson, Sterling Check, Urvasi Graham, Vesla Tonnesson, Yarrow Greer

**Not Present:** Anne Granberg, Chris Cochran, Rosalva Santos-Guzman, Samya Lutz, Sarah Cook

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
<p><b>Welcome</b></p>	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgment, housekeeping, and review of agreements.</p> <p><u>Land Acknowledgement:</u></p> <p>I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are here today on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish (LOCK-tuh-mish) people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and Semiahmoo.</p> <p>May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future. Our future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county.</p> <p>This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices of the first people of this land. Please join me in expressing the deepest respect for our indigenous neighbors, and gratitude for the enduring stewardship of our shared lands and waterways.</p> <p><a href="https://www.lhaqtemish.org/">https://www.lhaqtemish.org/</a> -Lhaq'temish Foundation</p> <p><u>Agreements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family and self-care come first.</li> <li>• Be kind and gentle with yourself and others and assume everyone is coming from a positive place.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Everyone has the best intentions.</li> <li>○ Listen with an open mind and heart.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Be mindful of this space. Step-in and step-out/Step-up and step-back. Offer your truth and insights and listen to others' truths and insights.</li> <li>• Treat each other with honor and grace. We are all working under difficult circumstances.</li> <li>• Embrace diversity. Remember that we all come from different backgrounds giving us different perspectives and only when we embrace that diversity can we develop creative solutions to address the child and family well-being needs in Whatcom County.</li> <li>• What is said here stays here.</li> <li>• Have fun.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Fist to Five Consensus Tool</a></p>



<p><b>Approve Meeting Minutes</b></p>	<p>No amendments to discuss. Minutes from February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022 were approved as presented.</p>
<p><b>Upcoming events, community shares, shout outs</b></p>	<p>Vesla Tonnessen shared that last weekend was the first retreat for the Parent Leadership Training Institute. There are 19 families taking the training, 17 of which are Spanish-speaking.</p>
<p><b>Workgroup Updates</b></p>	<p><b>County-Community Collaboration</b> group focused on what results and strategies should be shared across government and the community to improve the well-being of children and their families. They did this with an emphasis on Early Learning &amp; Care, Housing, Child &amp; Youth Mental Health.</p> <p>Their recommendations for Early Learning &amp; Care included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivering kindergarten readiness assessments in a culturally relevant way.</li> <li>• Increasing the number of Whatcom County early learning centers and child care locations that use the <i>Since Time Immemorial</i> curriculum &amp; other BIPOC-centered curricula.</li> </ul> <p>For the Housing priority area, their recommendations centered around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring access to housing justice by increasing the supply of available units for rent and purchase.</li> <li>• Building wealth for BIPOC families through increased opportunities for homeownership.</li> </ul> <p>The recommendations for the Child and Youth Mental Health priority area focused on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing opportunities for one-on-one and group peer support for parents, caregivers, and those expecting children</li> <li>• Create and share trauma-informed, LGBTQ+, anti-racist, and cultural humility training for parents, caregivers, and professionals who interact with children &amp; youth.</li> </ul> <p><b>Children and Families First</b> focused on what innovative government infrastructure is needed to sustain child and family well-being as a priority.</p> <p>Their recommendations for Infrastructure emphasized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a central navigation system for families.</li> <li>• Promote culturally responsive county services.</li> <li>• Incorporate minority voices and be actively anti-racist.</li> <li>• Bridge existing community resources and be a hub for community conversations and children and families.</li> <li>• Serve as a reminder for government agencies to ask at every decision point, “How will this impact children and families?”</li> <li>• Have strong leadership.</li> <li>• Have sustainable funding.</li> <li>• Outlast changes in county leadership and administrations.</li> </ul> <p>The recommendations made for the Health Department’s Child and Family Well-being Manager/Strategic Lead include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a job description that is developed with input from the CFWBTF team.</li> <li>• Join the Counties for Kids Peer Learning Network to collaborate with other counties working to strengthen systems and outcomes for young children.</li> <li>• Be a key actor in the implementation of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to ensure equity is the root of county government policies and practices that impact children and families.</li> </ul> <p>The Children and Families First group also wants to utilize the Help Me Grow Washington model as a framework for an Office of Children and Families. The entity should include: service navigation, community outreach, data collection and review, advocacy, and equity. Further research into specific existing models is also needed.</p>

	<p>The Increasing Family Involvement workgroup focused on what practices will increase the involvement of parents and caregivers, especially those with diverse life experiences in county government.</p> <p>The first focus of this team is to ensure people changing the system are representative of the community using the system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate voter registration and U.S. Citizenship requirement for volunteer committee participation.</li> <li>• Use a Generations Forward Family Council and Champion model to develop collaborative leadership.</li> <li>• Add resources to ensure GARE membership leads to policy and practice changes.</li> </ul> <p>Their next focus is to be transparent in how government provides support and information so that families are able to be informed participants in making system changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Limited English Proficiency families have access to qualified interpreters and translated materials.</li> <li>• Decrease barriers to family participation in government meetings and events.</li> <li>• Conduct policy reviews using equity tools and processes.</li> </ul> <p>Their final recommendation is to share with families how their feedback and participation is creating changes in the systems supporting families through a variety of ways including actual system changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support opportunities for families to learn about county government, civic engagement, and advocacy.</li> <li>• Have a process for following up with families who engage with county government.</li> <li>• Ensure culturally responsive outreach to underrepresented community members.</li> </ul> <p>The Resources and Funding focused on what resources are needed to support programs and services for young children and their families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Racial Equity Commission and the City of Bellingham are working on a pilot program, looking to collaborate.</li> <li>• Children’s Initiative Committee is building an opportunity to increase local funding dedicated to children and families.</li> </ul>
<p><b>BERK Consulting: Child &amp; Family Well-Being Fiscal Map for Whatcom County</b></p>	<p>Vivien Savath came to the meeting to present the Fiscal Map she has been putting together in partnership with the Health Department.</p> <p>In 2020 the Whatcom County Council adopted a Child and Family Action Plan after years of community partnership. The first step in the plan was to create a fiscal map to help understand the flow of current investment in children and family services in Whatcom County. This map will be used to look at multiple funding streams, identify gaps, and opportunities for alignment.</p> <p>About one-third of families have a household income of less than \$50,000. Housing stability, economic stability, and family strengthening programs in Whatcom County have received about \$30 million, the majority coming from federal funding. Households with incomes between the poverty level and the ALICE threshold are eligible for less funding sources and total dollar amounts. Funding for this group is reliant on private and local funding and currently amounts to \$9 million.</p> <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local funds are needed to address local conditions.</li> <li>• Increasing enrollment and participation can increase resources.</li> <li>• There are opportunities to access local funding with strategic investments.</li> <li>• Currently, the majority of funding is restricted in its uses.</li> <li>• On average, Whatcom County contributes \$1.6 million directly to this program.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Follow Up: Children’s Initiative Presentation</b></p>	<p>Ray Deck III gave an update on the Children’s Initiative. Plans to give a draft of systems coordinates to the County Council by the end of April. This initiative will be recommended to be placed on the ballot to help provide a more permanent funding source. The next step would be to draft language for the ordinance and for key stakeholders to be working on the initiative.</p>

<b>Meeting Feedback - Members</b>	This link is a way to capture feedback on the meeting and provide input on agenda items. This will be available through Wednesday. <a href="https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf59ubhjlyXFZQJa0pXGgQQ5HhwJ1jamGFzjQLXS6-zZC1hKQ/viewform">https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf59ubhjlyXFZQJa0pXGgQQ5HhwJ1jamGFzjQLXS6-zZC1hKQ/viewform</a>
<b>Public Comment</b>	No Public Comment
<b>Closing</b>	Adjourned at 17:33
<b><i>Next Meeting</i></b>	<b>Next regular meeting: March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022</b> <b><u>Location: Virtual</u></b>