



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

APRIL 10, 2023

Present: Allison Bishop, Anne Granberg, Beverly Porter, Carol Frazey, Chelsea Johnson, Christina Jackson, Colton Redtfeldt, Gregory Hansen, Jamie Desmul, Jen Wright, Katherine Orłowski, Kayla Schott-Bresler, Monika Mahal, Pamela Jons, Ray Deck, Rosalva Santos-Guzman, Samya Lutz, Sarah Kidd, Sterling Chick, Tilda Doughty, Vesla Tonnesson, Vann Dartt

Not Present: Keith Montoya, Mary Sewright, Mike Ford, Samantha Cruz Mendoza, Sativa Robertson, Sunshine Nelson, Yarrow Greer

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
Welcome	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgment, housekeeping, and review of agreements.</p> <p><u>Land Acknowledgement:</u> 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. 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. 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. https://www.lhaqtemish.org/ -Lhaq'temish Foundation</p> <p><u>Agreements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and self-care come first. • Be kind and gentle with yourself and others and assume everyone is coming from a positive place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone has the best intentions. ○ Listen with an open mind and heart. • 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. • Treat each other with honor and grace. We are all working under difficult circumstances. • 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. • What is said here stays here. • Have fun. <p>Fist to Five Consensus Tool – Amended 4.25.22</p>

Approve Meeting Minutes	No amendments to discuss. Minutes from March 13 th , 2023, were approved as presented.
Agenda Overview, Meeting Input/Evaluation	<p>Evaluation tool: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf59ubhjlyXFZQJa0pXGgQQ5HhwJ1jamGFziQLXS6-zZC1hKQ/viewform</p> <p>The purpose of this task force was reviewed, as stated in the Ordinance. “The purpose of Whatcom County Child and Family Well-being Task force is to continually review Whatcom governmental impact on children and family make recommendations for improvement for all departments.”</p> <p>Adjusting the agenda to accommodate co-chair scheduling and absence.</p>
Community Shares, Shout-outs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beverly Porter shouted out to the Spanish speaking families that trust in Parent to Parent program. The Spring Celebration and Egg Hunt that was held on the previous Saturday had over 60 families, over 1000 eggs. These are children with special health care needs and encouraged to be included and belonging. • Katherine Orłowski is shouting out and paying respects to all of the unhoused people of the community, along with those that are homeless and passed away this past year. • Jennifer Wright brought attention to the social gatherings being scheduled for relationship building within the task force. • Allison Williams shared that the Perinatal Mental Health Task Force is hosting two digital story telling workshops facilitated by Monica Koller, one in Spanish and one in English. • The board of the Bellingham Bay Outrigger Paddler club has waived fees for kids under 12. Parents can join for \$20 for the season to learn along with their child. • Members were asked what they are excited to contribute to the task force and skills they can share.
Approval of Phase III Report	<p>The Phase III Report was provided to everyone prior to this meeting for review and any revisions that had been mentioned were incorporated.</p> <p>This report will be presented to the Public Works and Health Committee on May 9th, 2023.</p> <p>The task force was asked if any other revisions needed, and no one spoke up.</p> <p>When presented for approval to submit this report as is for content, the task force voted using Fist to Five Consensus. This passed with consensus.</p> <p>Jennifer Wright asked if any members were willing to attend and help present this report to Council on May 9th, 2023. The time is unknown, and when it is posted an email will be sent out.</p> <p>Beverly Porter indicated interest depending on the time of the presentation. Katherine Orłowski also indicated interest. Colton Redtfeldt also indicated willingness to present.</p>
Where do we go from here? Review expectations and roles	<p>Over the last two years, the task force has had several phases of work, including the establishment of the task force, developing recommendations to Council, and responding to requests and actions related to Council. As the Phase III report is finished, the task force has an opportunity to discuss what the next phase should focus on. Each member of this task force is connected in some way to the community and brings that lens to this group.</p> <p>Ray Deck led a discussion to answer these questions: what should we be thinking about and working on, and based on these choices how should we organize ourselves?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Katherine Orłowski– Engaging the community is a goal, and hope to get those smaller entities to be connected to this work, especially connected the HCF and the opportunities through the RFPs. All participation is valuable, even just a little bit. • Samya Lutz– This is a unique task force, and has so many voices at this table. At a follow up meeting, would love to hear from staff members involved what would be useful from this task force for things like



Healthy Children's Fund Implementation Plan. What role would help and add value to include the community voices in that work.

- Allie Bishop – As a teacher of 2 to 5-year old children, there is a lot of talk related to the Healthy Children's Fund Implementation Plan, the workforce and trainings. Really getting to know providers and what the landscape looks like with high turnover, low pay, no marketing, isolated and trying to run a business. How can we boost something for childcare providers in the whole county? Ray Deck – serves on the board of child welfare in the state, wondering if there is a similar association of family-based providers and if that entity would be helpful in this. Allie does have an entity like that in mind and will gather information on it. Also mentioned being supportive of a "workforce development workgroup."
- Jamie Desmul – Struggles with staffing issues and retention. Funding going into facilities and programs will not be helpful if we do not have people to work in the area of childcare. Childcare is considered by many industries and institutions as a stepping stone, because it is not a field you can survive off of due to the funding. The pay is not enough to retain quality staff.
- Kayla Schott-Bresler – The Healthy Children's Fund implementation is such a big opportunity. The next piece of work is identifying how the task force is included in implementation and plan process. Vesla's idea around participatory budgeting is another great option that has come up by several people, boards and committees that could be a work plan item. Another idea is how we get more engagement from boards and committees in informing the county's legislative advocacy. Thinking about a conversation this summer around what issues are really important to this group and how the county can do more for children and families with the advocacy in Olympia. There are a lot of recommendations in the Health Children's Fund plan around vulnerable children, thinking through what the role of the county is and the Help Me Grow Framework, and the Perinatal MH work, and a lot of focus on childcare. It would be interesting to open up the other side of this work more. Also keep considering how the roles of the task force advocating through recommendations to the council has been really helpful and should continue.
- Ray Deck – Reminder that reducing family homelessness is also a bullet point in the ordinance.
- Vesla Tonnesson - I want to explore how we might work with the council to explore some sort of pilot participatory budgeting process on a small pot of county funds (relating to children and families), and what governance documents we might need to enable that. I want to define: Participatory Budgeting (PB) is a citizen engagement process through which community members decide how to allocate a portion of a public budget. Citizens make direct decisions about how government money is spent in their community by identifying and prioritizing public spending projects
- Katherine Orlowski - Recently, I've talked to members of our community who are public school employees. They all expressed how the public-school system is concerned about providing adequate service to their current kiddos as they are schooling students in closets. They are very concerned about adding more children, birth to toddlers.
- Vesla Tonnesson - It would be interesting to collect the reports that the HD has commissioned over the past 5 years relating to children and families and see what has happened with that information and the status of recommendations. I am an author of one forthcoming about Help Me Grow. But there have been many.
- Jennifer Wright - Going forward I'd like to have the task force at the tables as ideas are developed not only at the end. Whatcom County is a member of GARE, Government Alliance on Race and Equity. It's been adopted but not implemented as far as I know. I'd like to see leadership on the part of the county in elevating GARE and including community voices, ours and others, from the beginning not only at the end with us reacting with letters. Perhaps we could start with asking for a summary on how this is being implemented? With specific examples? I believe the spirit of this is what county government committed to: https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/GARE-Racial_Equity_Toolkit.pdf



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colton Redtfeldt – What role has the task force had in shaping the policies and actions in the county? Ray mentioned it is a dialogue between groups, based on work and research conducted in this group. Carol mentioned the ARPA funds are an example of the impact this task force has had. • Sarah Kidd – Works at Lydia Place and happy to share information about what families served by that organization see as needs to inform ongoing support needs and workgroup plans. • Allison Williams –There is a good deal of work happening in community coalitions that include parents, community members, and providers working together to improve the system. Community Health focuses on community engagement and this task force is directly bringing that engagement to the work.
<p>Recap of Whatcom County Council process and decision making regarding the Healthy Children’s Fund and ARPA funds</p>	<p>Councilmember Frazey spoke as a task force member to share the process and decision making.</p> <p>Whatcom County received \$44 million ARPA funds. On March 21st, 2023 there was a discussion at the County Council meeting about the \$4.5 million and expectation of use. Council voted to keep it with childcare, and these must be allocated by December 2024, and used by December 2026.</p> <p>The Healthy Children’s Fund discussion included a motion for \$1 million a year towards the Food Bank, in order to sustain it as there are a lot of cuts being made and programs that were in place during COVID being removed. This was voted down 2 to 5, as Council wants to use the funds for what they said it was going to be used for, and hope to find funding in other areas to support the Food Bank.</p> <p>There was a motion by Councilmember Kershner to add a line to page 12 of the HCF Implementation Plan to read: “No individual or provider receiving or offering services shall be required to be vaccinated for COVID-19 to participate.” That passed 6-0-1, with Todd Donovan abstaining.</p> <p>Katherine Orlowski shared they were grateful for the inclusion of language to not require the COVID-19 vaccination to participate.</p> <p>Whatcom County Council’s March 21, 2023 Meeting AB2023-127 Resolution adopting the Healthy Children’s Fund Implementation Plan Agenda: https://whatcom.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6027297&GUID=1D945CCC-7E55-460C-A824-DA28E6B4870C To watch go to 9:02 https://whatcom.granicus.com/player/clip/909?view_id=1&redirect=true&h=d4073cabad763e45206fbd4a00f7617</p>
<p>Announcement – volunteer interview committee for Child & Families Supervisor</p>	<p>Whatcom County Health and Community Services is interviewing for the Child & Families Supervisor role. This position will project manage around the Healthy Children’s Fund and supervise Community Health staff. The interviews will be done in two phases; the second phase will include community stakeholders. There is a request for two volunteers from this task force. If you are interested, please put your name in the chat and we will get more details as the time and dates are still undetermined. Beverly Porter indicated interest.</p> <p>Kayla Schott-Bresler also shared about a position within Whatcom County Health and Community Services for Special Projects Manager. This position facilitates the development of capital projects related to new housing, childcare, and behavioral health facilities in Whatcom County through community leadership and the administration of local capital funding. The Special Projects Manager will work with the Executive’s Office, Administrative Services, Facilities, elected officials, and most importantly, community partners to expand community capacity for these critical services.</p> <p>https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/whatcomcounty/jobs/3980157/special-projects-manager-health?pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs</p>



Open Discussion	<p>Monika Mahal mentioned there has been an increase in substance use disorders impacting children and families, and wonders what work could intersect with the Health and Community Services. Pediatric practices are concerned that there is not enough education happening in the schools. Given the increased number of cases in the hospital and impacting families, what role, if any, should this task force? Kayla Schott-Bresler mentioned there are discussions broadly to engage awareness in the community. There are public events coming up around the topic as well, and will happily invite this task force to those as well.</p> <p>Katherine Orłowski wonders if there is a defined “thriving” baseline for families. Allison mentioned that there are community health assessments that help define this in that work. Example is kindergarten readiness, family stability in economics. There is both qualitative and quantitative data in this assessment. The data for under five years is less available. The Healthy Children Fund Implementation Plan has a data development agenda.</p> <p>Kayla Schott-Bresler mentioned that a potential future agenda item could include the food system plan and the role of basic needs and community readiness to leverage outside resources like WIC and the Food Bank. Here's the link to the food system plan - https://whatcom.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6120976&GUID=5BDE01CF-A412-40EA-A233-FBE10E63D578</p>
Public Comment	No public comment.
Closing	Adjourned at 5:21 PM
Next Meeting	<p>Next regular meeting: May 8, 2023 <u>Location: Hybrid</u></p>

