

At-A-Glance: Draft Goals & Strategies for Washington’s Statewide Early Learning Coordination Plan

A shared vision for coordination among early learning system partners.

This five-year plan will create an aspirational vision for how the state and community partners, working with parents, caregivers and early learning professionals, can work together to support the healthy development and school readiness of Washington’s youngest children (from prenatal to age 8) and their families. It includes high-level goals and strategies designed to help all children and families thrive, and to eliminate long-standing inequities in early learning outcomes for Black, Indigenous, People of Color and other marginalized communities. The plan will be a catalyst for the partners to coordinate priority actions, create more detailed implementation plans, coordinate policy efforts and determine the metrics and outcomes needed to measure progress.

Here is a quick guide to the goals and strategies. If you’d like more details in a specific section, we recommend you watch a video and/or look at the full list of goals and strategies located on our webpage. It is very important that you take the short survey at the end of this document. We will use that feedback to make adjustments to the final plan.

Healthy Children & Families

Goals (what we hope to be true for all children, families & early learning workforce)

- A. All communities have access to resources to support their family’s health, including their children’s optimal health and development, and ensure that long-standing inequities in health outcomes for Black, Indigenous and People of Color are eliminated.
- B. Create and maintain racially equitable, integrated and coordinated health services that provide continuous promotion and prevention supports (no gaps).

Strategies to achieve Goals:

- 1. Develop capacity in people and organizations to deliver programs and services based on an understanding of **historical and generational trauma**. (Goal A)
- 2. Build system-wide awareness of and responsiveness to, the **unique fears/barriers facing immigrants** that negatively impact their access to health services. (Goal A)
- 3. Ensure a system that provides “**whole-person and whole-family care**.” (Goal B)
- 4. Identify gaps in **continuity of services & eligibility**, develop creative & flexible system redesigns. (Goal B)
- 5. Enhance **healthy babies support and prenatal care**. (Goals A & B)
- 6. **Eliminate disparities in expulsions** for Black, Indigenous and other Children of Color in early learning settings with mental & behavioral supports and resources. (Goal A)
- 7. Increase funding and capacity to provide **additional mental health supports** for infants, children, families and providers. (Goal B)

Strong, Stable, Nurturing, Safe and Supported Families

Goals (what we hope to be true for all children, families & early learning workforce)

- A. Parents are healthy, resilient and can meet the basic needs of their families.
- B. All families thrive with access to community social connections that honor their unique shared experiences, culture and language.
- C. Families with young children are able to identify, connect, access and benefit from the services and supports they need. Those services are pro- active, family-centered, culturally responsive, strengths-based, interconnected and provided in environments where families feel safe and supported.

Strategies to achieve Goals:

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1. Meet **basic needs** of families, aligning with – and building on – the strategies identified by the [Poverty Reduction Work Group](#). (Goal A)
2. Support and **expand paid time off** for parents to support their family and children’s health across their ages and stages. (Goal A)
3. Increase opportunities for families to get support and **build trusting personal connections** through expanding and promoting peer-to-peer support groups, informal/online/social media groups, and hiring community leaders to serve as family liaisons. (Goal B)
4. Expand culturally sensitive **universal prenatal screening**. (Goal C)
5. Expand **statewide information resources** to help families connect with the services and supports they need & coordinate their care. (Goal C)
6. Expand community-based family supports that provide culturally sensitive **navigation assistance** for services and supports. (Goal A)

Positive Early Learning Experiences

Goals (what we hope to be true for all children, families & early learning workforce)

- A. Positive early learning services and supports are available and affordable for all children, with an emphasis on creating availability for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, those with special needs, and those located in rural areas.
- B. Children with special needs, trauma and other challenges are nurtured and their families receive the support they need.
- C. Every community has inclusive and culturally responsive resources delivered in their language of choice, at no cost to families therefore eliminating inequities for Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color.
- D. Transitions for children and families (from prenatal through 3rd grade, across ages and between programs and services) are smooth and welcoming.

Strategies to achieve Goals:

1. Make universal **social emotional training and resources** readily and easily accessible. (Goals A & B)
2. **Enhance affordability of early learning services** for families who struggle to afford child care. Change the state’s income eligibility from Federal Poverty Level to Area Median Income, and eliminate the benefit cliff for services by adding multiple tiers of subsidy and co-payment. (Goal A)
3. **Identify and replicate promising programs** that are successful in supporting Black, Indigenous, & People of Color and other underserved communities. (Goals A, B & C)
4. **Expand high-quality preschool options** to create an integrated approach to serving 3 & 4-year-olds that ensures increased access and more inclusive programming across program types. (Goals A & B)
5. **Expand access** to home based services for expectant parents and families with new babies and young children. (Goals A, B, C & D)
6. Ensure **cultural practices, norms and home languages** are fully integrated in early learning programs, services, supports and practices for children birth through 3rd grade. (Goal A)
7. Create coordinated approaches for **supporting children and families through transitions**. (Goal D)
8. Invest in culturally responsive **community activities** that enable parents and caregivers access to resources. (Goal C)
9. **Create inclusive settings** from birth through 3rd grade in partnership with families. (Goal B)

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Supported Early Learning Workforce

This includes: teachers, early childhood providers, teacher’s aides, FFN (family, friend or neighbor provider), home visiting, paraprofessionals, administrative and instructional leaders, early intervention providers, therapists, social workers, mental health professionals, child psychologists, family support specialists, providers who work with children with delays and disabilities. *Valuable Partners: health care providers.*

Goals (what we hope to be true for all children, families & early learning workforce)

- A. Our workforce is robust, skilled, diverse, anti-racist and culturally responsive, with multiple pathways available to support continuing education, recruitment and retention.
- B. Resources are available to enable the workforce to feel comfortable, confident and culturally responsive in supporting children in their care.
- C. People in the early childhood workforce are well compensated including non-financial resources.
- D. Provide pandemic assistance to programs, services and supports to retain workforce and rebuild sustainable business practices.

Strategies to achieve Goals:

- 1. Expand access to a centralized, anti-bias, anti-racist **foundational training portal** for all providers. (Goal B)
- 2. Provide **healing-centered training and anti-bias and anti-racist education**, including the effect of historical trauma on Black, Indigenous and People of Color. (Goal B)
- 3. Radically **transform pathways into the profession** and to career advancement to diversify the workforce, with a focus on Black, Indigenous and People of Color. (Goal A)
- 4. Increase the number of **diverse early learning leaders** from Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities. (Goals A & B)
- 5. **Enhance compensation** to ensure that all professionals in the early learning workforce are earning equitable wages (including benefits). (Goals C & D)
- 6. **Enhance retention of strong workforce**, including professional development opportunities to learn from one another based on community needs. (Goals C & D)
- 7. Expand **access to shared services** (i.e., healing-centered approaches and support for financial and administrative capacity building) including in languages and methods that work for all. (Goals B & D)
- 8. Provide **child care health consultation** to early learning professionals that matches culturally and linguistically with families and communities. (Goal B)
- 9. **Build public awareness** that results in advocacy for budget and policy actions that address the need to increase compensation to enhance the stability of the early learning workforce. (Goal C)

Powerful Communities & Responsive System

Goals (what we hope to be true for all children, families & early learning workforce)

- A. The early learning system is responsive to Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and those historically marginalized. Communities of color co-design policy, strategy development and implementation, resulting in programs and services that are accountable to those communities for outcomes.
- B. Robust funding and policies exist to support equitable outcomes for children and families.
- C. All early learning services and supports develop and embed continuous improvement mechanisms that allow for flexibility & change that benefits Black, Indigenous & People of Color and historically marginalized communities, and includes engagement of parents, caregivers and families in meaningful ways.
- D. Local communities have power to articulate their needs, their assets, their hopes and have an equitable partnership with, and able to influence, the statewide system of practices, policies and decisions.
- E. Strengthen the foundational supports for the early learning system (i.e., data collection, financing,

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governance and coordinating structures, communication, etc.). Infrastructure will provide the resources for programs, services and supports to succeed.

Strategies to achieve Goals:

1. Implement a coordinated, **comprehensive data collection system** that is co-created with state and community partners, including work with Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities, that is available and accessible for planning and tracking progress. (Goals A & E)
2. Develop **holistic definitions** of “school readiness” and “life readiness” and a definition/agreement of what is included in the “early learning system.” (Goal E)
3. Develop **outcome metrics and a coordinated accountability structure** that will be used for the monitoring and evaluation of the Early Learning Plan. (Goal E)
4. Create formal opportunities (that include families and leaders of color) to **co-design, co-develop and evaluate approaches to reduce racial disparities in early learning**. Communities of color co-design and co-develop programs that meet the needs in their communities. (Goal C)
5. **Increase budget resources** (local, state and federal) for early learning using an equitable allocation model (to meet the needs of marginalized communities). Increase the use of braided state and federal funds for early learning programs. (Goal B)
6. **Fund and support parent voice** at all levels of decision making. Expand leadership pathways that includes use of mentors and financial stipends for Black, Indigenous Parents of Color and historically marginalized communities to participate. (Goals A & D)
7. Provide resources to **support regional planning and coordinating structures** across the state to ensure that every region has an equitable voice in making the early learning system responsive to families and providers in local communities, especially the most underserved communities. (Goal D)
8. Explore and refine the **implementation of quality initiatives**, evaluating how quality is measured, how compensation is tied to quality, how quality is experienced by children, families and providers. Assess the impacts of quality definitions and implementation of quality initiatives on Black, Indigenous and Communities of Color and underserved communities. (Goals A, C & E)
9. Engage parents and the workforce to **develop or update state regulations** that are guided by equity and anti-racism frameworks that support desired outcomes for marginalized communities. (Goals A & E)
10. **Eliminate the “digital divide”** for children and families, making access to technology for Black, Indigenous and People of Color and other underserved communities more equitable. (Goals A, B, C & E)

After reviewing this document, please use the survey link found [here](#) to share your feedback. No matter how many of our materials you review, you only need to take the survey one time. Please identify any places that your comments are about a specific area of the plan (i.e. Healthy Children and Families).

Thank you!