



# State *of* Children & Families 2018 Report



# State of Children & Families

## 2018 Report

### Our Vision

All children have high quality early care and learning experiences that support optimal growth and development leading to success in school and life.

Northwest Early Learning (NWEEL) was founded in 2005 as a cross-systems and cross-county collaboration to foster resilient families, schools, and communities in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties. The State of Children and Families Report gives a snapshot of how children (prenatal - age 8) and their families are doing across the region and compared to the state.

### Strengthening Families Protective Factors Framework

There are five protective factors that form the foundation of Strengthening Families. They are characteristics that have been shown to make positive outcomes more likely for young children and their families, and to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect. For more information about this framework, go to <https://bit.ly/2NhFC2N>



## About This Report

One of NWEL's initiatives is to create the *State of Children and Families Report*. Since 2013, the *State of Children and Families Report* has provided demographic and programmatic data to illustrate key components of our early learning systems and progress. We also shine a light on local families, professionals, and organizations supporting young children in our region. The theme of this report is fostering resilient families, schools, and communities for young children.

This report is organized by the Washington Early Learning Plan **READY & SUCCESSFUL** Frameworks:

Children  
pg #3-4



Families  
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Professionals  
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Schools  
pg #9-10



Communities  
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**= READY & SUCCESSFUL**

### What are the Protective Factors that build resilience?

- Parental Resilience
- Social Connections
- Concrete Supports
- Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development
- Social and Emotional Competence of Children



### How do communities support this?

We can improve outcomes for disadvantaged children, families, and neighborhoods by using evidence-based and action-oriented approaches.



### Examples:

- Engaging families in services even before children are born
- High quality child care and early learning programs
- Parent social support
- Concrete and emotional support for low-income families
- Parent support through home visits and education
- Mental health and substance abuse treatment

## How To Read The Report

Northwest Early Learning has adopted the Ready & Successful framework as a roadmap for building a comprehensive, coordinated, and effective early learning system across our five counties.

For information about the Early Learning Plan online go to <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ELP.pdf>



**Green handprints** in the report are used to indicate special community efforts to foster resilience in children, families, and systems.



**How To Read the Data Tables:** Up & down arrows in the data tables indicate the data value has increased or decreased (by any amount) over the previous year. No arrow indicates that the numbers haven't changed. Right arrow (→) indicates that there are no new data for that indicator, an asterisk (\*) indicates a new data indicator and a triangle (Δ) indicates data is calculated differently from last year.

**Sources:** Data included in the report were collected from both primary and secondary sources based on the best data available at the time of development. We rely on early learning professionals to provide information about the children and families they serve. We also refer to state data sources throughout.

For 2018 data sources and definitions go to <https://www.nwesd.org/2018-state-children-family-report-sources>





# Children Ready & Successful

Ready and successful children are healthy and socially, emotionally, and cognitively prepared for success in school and life.

Data Indicator	Island	San Juan	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	State
Number of children under age 5	5,408 ↑	464 ↑	7,398 ↑	48,827 ↑	11,638 ↑	454,134 ↑
Children under 6 who live in families in extreme poverty	7.4% ↑	16.4% ↓	9.1% ↓	7% ↓	5.6% ↓	7.8% ↓
Children served by Children's Administration (CPS, Child Welfare, Family Reconciliation, etc.)	1,013 ↓	124 ↑	2,218 ↑	10,982 ↑	3,727 ↑	112,182 ↑
Number of foster care placements, ages 0-17	63 ↓	< 10	146 ↑	755 ↑	319	9,530 ↑
Children with developmental delays, ages birth-3, served by Early Services for Infants & Toddlers (ESIT)	197 ↑	28 ↑	197	2,102 ↑	572 ↑	17,658 ↑
<b>Kindergarteners meeting or exceeding standards by area of development in Fall 2017:</b>						
Social-Emotional standards	76.2% ↑	74.1% ↑	71.8% ↑	74.2% ↑	73.5% ↑	76.7% ↑
Physical standards	84.8% ↑	86.4% ↑	82.2% ↑	83.2% ↑	87.8% ↑	82.3% ↑
Language standards	74.6% ↓	69.1% ↓	68.3% ↓	69.6% ↓	74.9% ↓	71.6% ↓
Cognitive standards	68.8% ↓	64.2% ↓	67.8% ↓	69.3% ↓	75.2% ↓	71.6% ↓
Literacy standards	84.2% ↓	87.5% ↓	64.3% ↓	74.8% ↓	77.0% ↓	77.5% ↓
Math standards	70.0% ↓	77.8% ↓	56.2% ↑	63.3% ↓	62.6% ↓	66%
Percentage of students meeting 3rd Grade Reading Standards *	51.2%	64.3%	49.9%	55.0%	51.5%	53.6%
8th graders with depressive symptoms →	24%	29%	30%	27%	26%	28%
On-time graduation rate, public schools (2016-2017) ▲	83.3%	82.5%	73.3%	79.5%	77.0%	79.3%

For 2018 data sources and definitions go to <https://www.nwesi.org/2018-state-children-family-report-sources>



## Fostering Resilience in Children

In our region, and around the state, the focus on early learning is increasingly shifting toward social-emotional development. Young children who develop strong social-emotional skills tend to have better success in school. These skills are essential for children to build the language, cognition, resilience, and mental wellness necessary for success in school and life.

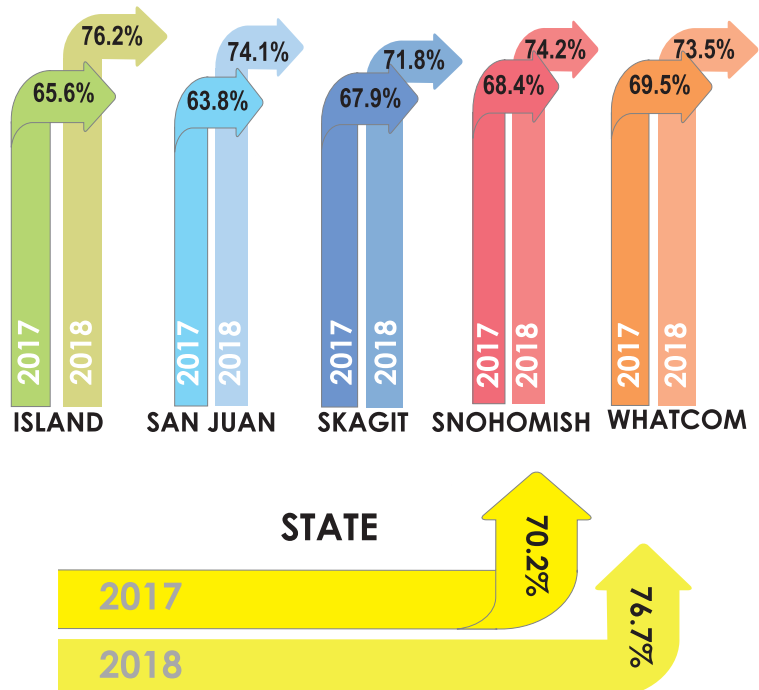
As adults in children's lives, we can help them build these skills through nurturing attachment and stimulation. Environments that support children's social-emotional development allow them to:

- express their emotions
- show and experience empathy
- connect with others and take turns
- solve problems
- understand expectations and limits

This positive development can happen in a wide variety of settings including the homes of family members, friends, and neighbors, licensed childcare, high quality preschools, and play & learn groups. Regardless of where children are, caregivers with the capacity to connect with them in nurturing ways can build children's resilience to mitigate the effects of the negative events that they may experience.

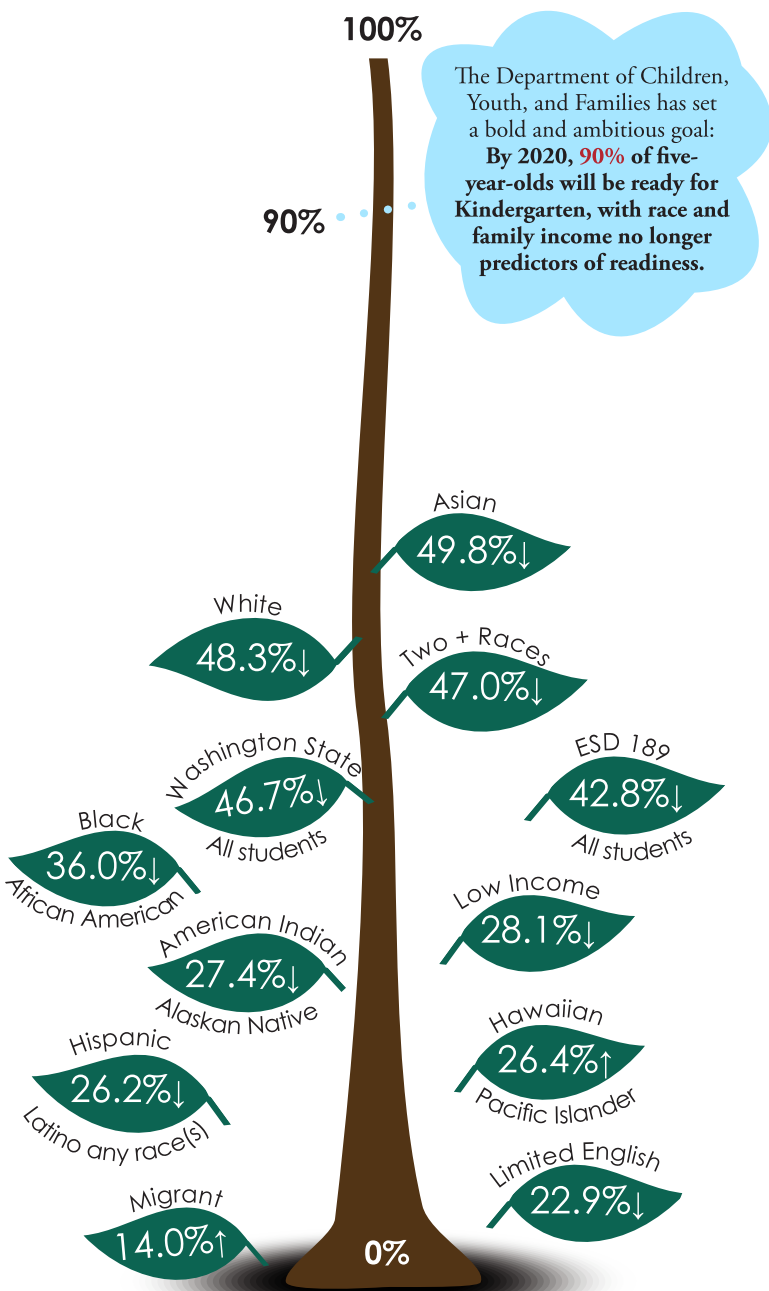
## Social-Emotional Readiness

According to the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) data, our efforts to support Social-Emotional Readiness in every county are starting to pay off!





# Children in NW Region Ready in All Six Areas by Race, Ethnicity & Special Population



## Stella

Stella is a bright, energetic, only child who first visited Playscape, one of Island County's Play & Learn groups, when she was 2 ½ years old. Mother Mentors, a local family support organization that facilitates Playscape, welcomed Stella. Due to moderate/severe autism and living in a small rural community, Stella had limited exposure to peers. Early on, she flitted about the room looking at materials briefly and did not interact with other children, although she was curious. Stella continued to come to Playscape where her engagement in play was supported. Because of the strong partnership between Mother Mentors, the Toddler Learning Center (TLC), and the Early Support for Infants & Toddlers (ESIT), there are many children with a variety of needs who are learning and interacting in this play-based environment.

In the fall, Mother Mentors continued to welcome Stella to Playscape with her supports. When the District met with Playscape staff to share Stella's education plan, the Playscape Facilitator integrated activities into the program that supported Stella's growth. Attending three days a week, she progressed significantly. She began to focus on activities and interact with other children and adults. By the end of the year, Stella became comfortable in the Play & Learn environment and was much more ready to engage in her next educational step.

Emily (Stella's mother) shared that: "Stella enjoyed her time at Playscape and made a lot of progress. It was refreshing to work with a group of educators who were open to adapting their existing programs to accommodate my daughter's special needs. All were intuitive, creative and paid attention to Stella and how she learns. Teachers, therapists, and her aide communicated and worked together to make Playscape a safe and interesting place to learn. She was able to participate in circle time, music and the art activities, while being exposed to typically developing peers. I felt very comfortable sending Stella to school knowing how much she liked going and how many people were invested and interested in her education."

WaKIDS is a whole-child screening conducted during the first couple of months of kindergarten that helps to ensure a successful start to school and connect the key adults in a child's life.

- ### How You Can Help:
- Continue to learn about child development
  - Increase exploration of equity issues through training and reading
  - Read, "Courageous Conversations about Race"
  - Take time to build trust and attachment with young children and families
  - Create opportunities for kids to explore within safe environments



# Families Ready & Successful

Ready and successful parents, families, and caregivers have the information and resources needed to be their children's first and most important teachers.

Data Indicator	Island	San Juan	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	State
Households with all children under age 6	2,032 ↑	217 ↓	2,403 ↓	20,188 ↑	4,387 ↓	180,820 ↓
Estimated Basic Annual Cost of living for a family with 2 adults, 1 infant, 1 preschooler (2016)	\$69,876 ↑	\$63,900 ↑	\$72,060 ↑	\$83,652 ↑	\$66,480 ↑	\$62,472 ↑
Median Household Income (2016) *	\$64,813	\$58,029	\$60,983	\$78,716	\$56,411	\$67,106
Unemployment rate (July 2018)	4.9% ↑	3.1% ↓	4.8% ↓	3.8% ↑	4.4%	4.6% ↑
Homeless individuals living as family units	166 ↓	57 ↓	338 ↓	858 ↓	816 ↑	22,416 ↑
Children participating in the Basic Food Program	19% ↓	17% ↓	36% ↓	21% ↓	26% ↓	29% ↓
Percent of births that qualified for Medicaid assistance (2015) →	28.6%	58.8%	63.1%	40.7%	52.1%	49.2%
Mothers receiving prenatal care in the first trimester (2015) →	74.6%	71.1%	68.6%	73.0%	67.3%	73.7%
Total individuals served by Women Infants & Children (WIC) supplemental nutrition	2,741 ↓	332 ↑	6,037 ↓	19,404 ↓	6,734 ↓	274,888 ↓
Number of spaces available in Early Head Start, including migrant and tribal	27	0	66 ↓	181 ↓	113	3,264 ↓
Teen pregnancy (15-19 years) (2016)	46 ↓	2 ↓	116 ↑	473 ↓	132 ↓	5,396 ↓
Teen birth rate (15-19 years) per 1,000 (2016) *	14.4	< 5	21	11.8	9.3	16.2

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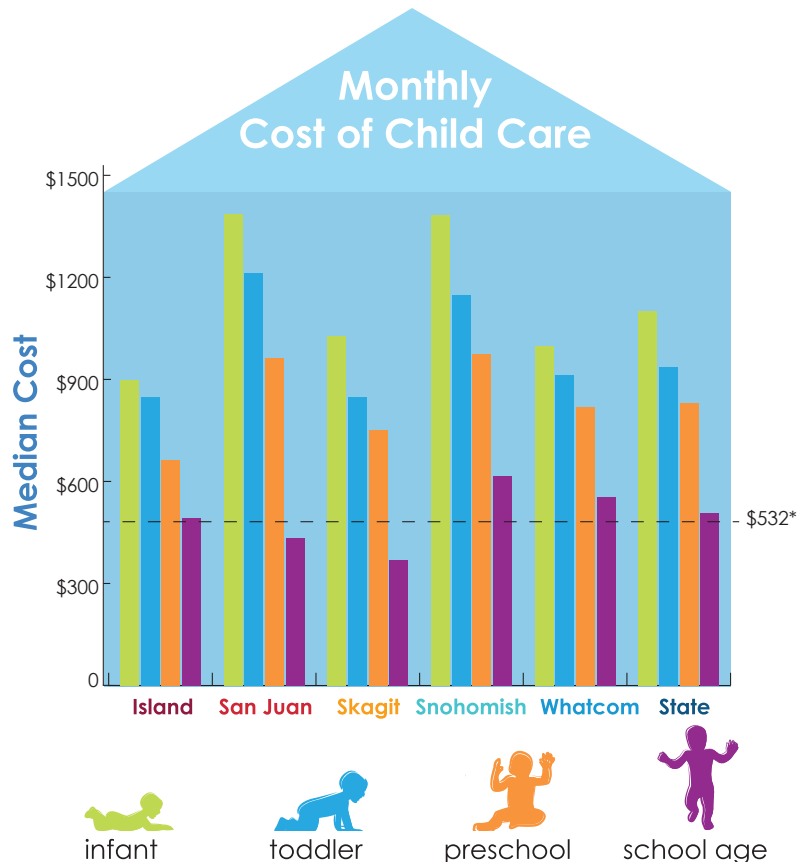


## Fostering Resilience in Families

Being a parent or caregiver is a great adventure, but it's certainly not always easy. All families with young children have hopes and dreams, but can face any number of pressures from employment, finances, relationships, transitions, and environmental factors. For some families, these stressors are constant and pervasive, creating what is often referred to as toxic stress.

Parents who have had the opportunity to build resilience can often function and parent well even when faced with serious challenges, adversity, and trauma. This resilience is influenced (positively or negatively) by their own childhood experiences and relationships, but can continue to be developed, given appropriate support.

Family members can build resilience even when faced with significant challenges, when we recognize and encourage the strengths that all families have, respect their roles as decision-makers, and encourage their self care. We can also work to clear barriers to accessing services and navigating health, education, and social systems to increase the time and energy they can dedicate to developing attachments with their children. This will help to create a prosperous cycle of resiliency from generation to generation.

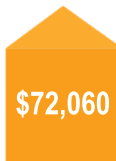
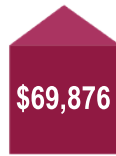


The colored bars represent the cost of child care in centers for each age group, as represented in the graphics above. \*At Western Washington University, a year's tuition for state residents is \$6,387 or \$532 a month by way of comparison.



**Median Household Income (2016)**

**Annual Cost of Living (2016)**



## Strengthening Families

Mary lives on San Juan Island and is a single mom to six-year-old Olive. She runs her own cleaning business that supports her family, and is breaking ground in August on her first home with the help of Homes for Islanders.

Six and a half years ago, Mary was homeless. She was nine months sober and had just returned to San Juan Island following a six-month inpatient treatment program with her infant daughter. Mary worked with San Juan County Health and Community Services to enroll in the Compass outpatient mental health treatment program and the Tenant Based Rental Assistance Program. Olive went to preschool with a scholarship from the Family Umbrella Group while Mary worked and got her life back on track. Mary also focused on strengthening her relationship with her daughter, attending the parent-baby playgroups and parenting classes at the Family Resource Center. In addition to these supports, an advocate from the Parent Child Assistance Program visited Mary monthly for three years. Having an advocate helped her set goals. Mary stated, "There's huge power in goal setting and having a peer who's been through it; you can't do it on your own."

The programs that came together around Mary offered her a chance to make meaningful changes in her life and be successful in her recovery. Mary dreams now of mentoring kids ages 10-14, as she was living on the streets by age 12. She understands how lost a child can feel. Her motto, "If my problems have brought me to prayer, they have served a purpose." Mary's goal now is to give back to the community that has supported her in so many ways.

## How You Can Help:

- Find out about family support organizations and consider volunteering, donating, or advocating for them
- Help connect families to resources in the community
- Provide parents and children emotional support, when needed
- Encourage families and acknowledge their strengths







# Professionals Ready & Successful

Ready and successful professionals are prepared, knowledgeable, and responsive to children’s different learning styles, capabilities, and developmental goals so that they ensure a high-quality learning experience for children.

Data Indicator	Island	San Juan	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	State
Children under 6 with all parents in the workforce	3,042 ↓	388 ↓	5,016 ↓	33,144 ↑	8,060 ↑	305,216 ↓
Percent of children under 6 with all parents in the workforce	60.1% ↓	67.5% ↓	61.5% ↑	59% ↓	60.9% ↑	59.1% ↓
Number of spaces for 3 & 4 yr olds in state & federally funded preschool (ECEAP & Head Start)	173 ↑	55 ↑	379 ↓	1,702 ↑	620	24,964 ↑
Number of licensed child care and education programs – centers and family homes	41	6	87 ↓	461 ↓	85 ↓	5,005 ↓
Number of spaces available for children in licensed child care and education programs - centers and family homes	1,164 ↓	193	2,159 ↓	14,395 ↓	2,465 ↓	147,412 ↑
Percent of licensed child care providers enrolled in Early Achievers	72% ↑	100%	92% ↑	61% ↓	76% ↑	70% ↓
Coalition members affiliated with Northwest Early Learning *	100	38	61	68	120	N/A

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## Small Business Development Program

In November 2017, the Opportunity Council’s Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington created the Small Business Development Program. This project will increase child care capacity in Whatcom County by recruiting and training potential child care providers. An AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer, Josh Peck, was hired to help run the project.

The Development Program began by identifying Whatcom County areas that urgently need more child care. This information was included in a report distributed to stakeholders in early learning and social services, found in the Child Care Supply, Demand, and Cost in Whatcom County at <https://bit.ly/2wOp0Br>.

The Development Program collaborates with local non-profit organizations to emphasize the importance of high-quality child care. These organizations include the YMCA and the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce.

In collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, a child care impact survey was released to employers. Child Care Aware and Workforce Snohomish conducted a similar employer survey in Snohomish County, which was used as a template. The Whatcom survey results were clear: 80% of respondents reported employees missing work due to child care barriers. The Opportunity Council hopes to hold a roundtable discussion about child care with interested businesses.

The Development Program conducted outreach to potential child care providers by holding information sessions on starting a child care business. Seventeen potential providers had the opportunity to ask questions to a panel of child care experts. Many attendees voiced interest in taking an upcoming Child Care Basics training course.

This pilot project looks forward to expanding into Skagit, Island, Snohomish, and San Juan counties, likely with the help of a VISTA volunteer next year. Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington has already begun discussions around conducting a Skagit County employer survey in collaboration with the Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County and the Children’s Council of Skagit County.

**For additional information, please contact:**  
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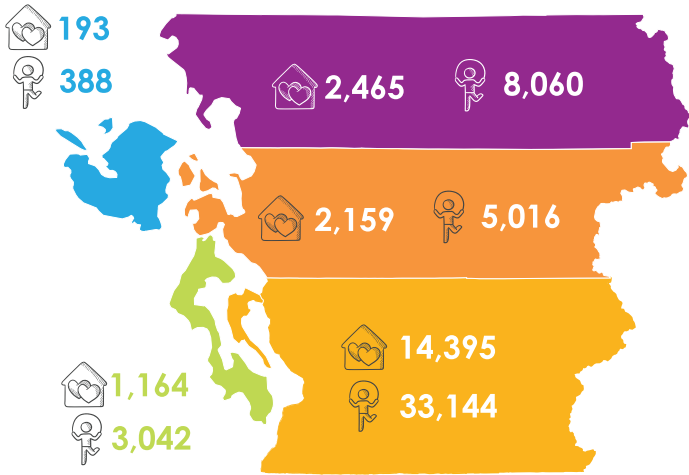
Whatcom

Skagit

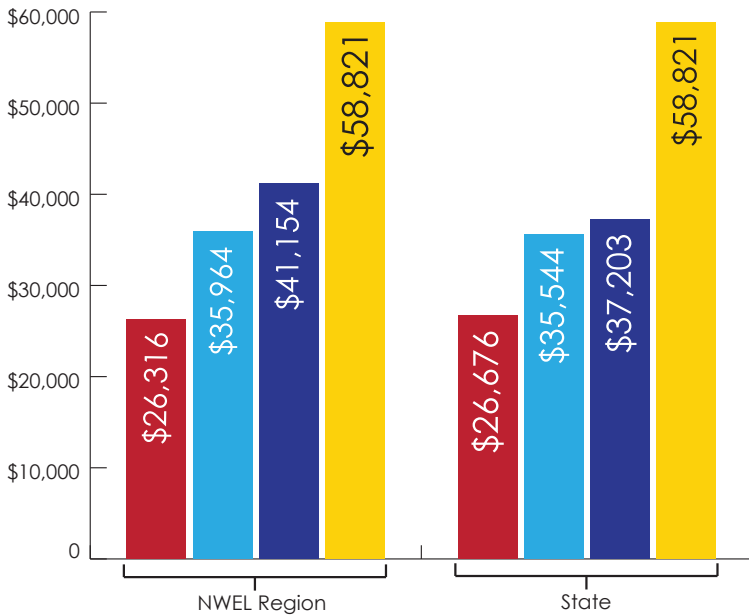
Snohomish

San Juan

Island



## Early Learning Professionals Average Annual Salary (2014)



- Child Care Teacher
- Child Care Center Director
- Family Child Care Provider
- K-12 Teacher (Statewide)

## How You Can Help:

- Find out what resources are needed in your local preschool or child care and help as you can
- Connect people interested in joining the child care field with Child Care Aware NW
- Consider providing high-quality child care for the children of your family, friends, and neighbors



## Gurpreet and Aarza Singh

In Whatcom County, families, friends and neighbors with young children are being welcomed to free weekly Kaleidoscope Play & Learn (KPL) groups at 14 different locations. These quality, facilitated learning experiences are provided in neighborhood locations for children, birth to 5 years old, and the adults who care for them. At one such location, Gurpreet Singh and his daughter, Aarza, 4, have been coming to Play and Learn all year. With Singh's rural lifestyle and busy work schedule, this local early learning program has proven invaluable to their learning and Aarza's development. They speak both Punjabi and English. When they started attending, Aarza was extremely shy and would not detach from her daddy – at first, she didn't talk at all. After attending for a few weeks she began opening up and separating from her father, initially with teachers, then expanding to play near, then with other children. Since then, Aarza's language and social skills development have been thriving! Gurpreet is so very happy they found "this wonderful program" and feels it is preparing his daughter for kindergarten as she learns counting, sorting, numbers, and letters. Playing and singing have helped her confidence to flourish. "Aarza has developed such a great taste and a habit for singing. We never sing any songs at home in English, so it is very pleasant to discover that she is bilingual and can sing beautifully in both languages, Punjabi and English. We are thankful they incorporate singing." Gurpreet recommends this program to everyone. As a parent leader, he translated the KPL flyer and preschool screening information into Punjabi and is providing outreach in his community. He even translated the daily welcome song into Punjabi and is teaching it to the group.



**Statistic:** Over 1,300 people have attended these play groups in the 2017-2018 school year.





# Schools Ready & Successful

Ready and successful schools are prepared to support the learning and development of every child in their community.

Data Indicator	Island	San Juan	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	State
K-12 enrollment, public schools	8,291 ↑	1,794 ↓	19,148 ↑	110,021 ↑	27,577 ↑	1,100,779 ↑
Kindergarten enrollment, public schools	657	102 ↓	1,418 ↓	8,019 ↑	2,054 ↑	80,981 ↑
Free & Reduced Lunch enrollment	34.9%	34.7% ↑	50.1% ↓	35.5% ↓	40.2% ↓	42.9% ↓
Percent of students that are Transitional Bilingual - English Language Learners	3.1% ↑	5.3% ↑	14.2% ↓	10.5% ↓	7.3% ↑	11.3% ↑
Percent of incoming kindergarteners READY in all 6 areas of development, fall 2017	50.1% ↑	50.0% ↓	35.8% ↓	42.5% ↓	46.3% ↓	46.7% ↓
Percent of incoming kindergarteners NOT ready in any area of development, fall 2017	5.1% ↑	6.3% ↓	5.7%	5.5% ↑	4.3% ↑	5.8% ↑
Number of districts that met at least one age expectation target for children (Birth-3) with IEPs	1/3	2/3	6/7	11/14	5/7	N/A
Students from low-income households who graduated high school in four years	74.4% ↓	78.1% ↑	64.3% ↓	69.3% ↓	64.9% ↓	70.0% ↑
Districts in the region that accepted PreK-K Transition Reports out of total number of districts	3/3	4/4 ↑	7/7 ↑	13/14 ↑	7/7	N/A
Number of Regional Transition Reports shared between preschool and kindergarten teachers	144 ↓	65 ↓	307 ↑	832 ↑	428 ↑	N/A

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## Fostering Resilience in Schools

As evidenced by the information on page 10, early childhood experiences create a foundation for future growth, learning, and development. It is in part, for this reason that schools and early learning centers serving children from birth to age eight have a tremendous opportunity and responsibility to create relationships and environments within which our youngest children can thrive.

When creating these positive and developmentally appropriate environments, schools are challenged to smooth out the significant transitions that young children experience in their first years of school. Building relationships with the other adults in children’s lives has proven to be an effective strategy for building resilience in classrooms and schools.

Connecting with family members early and often can provide an essential link between home and school that allows the adults in young children’s lives to support their successful navigation of various environments. WaKIDS provides an opportunity to begin this important connection between family members and

teachers before the first day of Kindergarten. In addition, teachers and elementary school administrators benefit from connecting with community early learning providers in order to better understand the students that they’ll be working with. Use of Transition Reports, and shared learning between Pre-K and Kindergarten Teachers, are two promising approaches to strengthening this connection

Another exciting development in the northwest region is that many school districts are developing early learning centers on their premises. See the example on page 10 for more information about how Lake Stevens School District has developed their center to connect professionals with each other and families to build more resilient schools.

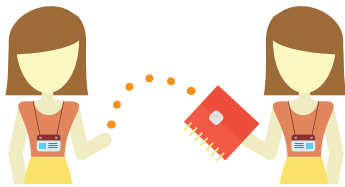




# Relationship Between Kindergarten Readiness and 3rd Grade Proficiency \*



\*This analysis is based on students who took the 3rd grade SBA during the 2016-17 school year and who participated in WaKIDS during the 2013-14 school year. In fall 2013, only about 44% of kindergartners participated in WaKIDS; thus, this data only represents those who were in WaKIDS in 2013 and took the SBA in 3rd grade. Students without corresponding WaKIDS data are not encompassed in this graph.



## Transition Reports

Pre-K- Kindergarten Transition Reports are an important tool to help smooth children's transitions into Kindergarten. They allow Pre-K teachers to share an understanding of students' strengths, needs, passions, and idiosyncrasies with kindergarten teachers. This practice relies heavily on the dedication of teachers and provides a tremendous service to our young scholars.

## How You Can Help:

- Help share information between schools and community agencies
- Complete transition reports for your students or thank someone who has
- Connect with other early care and learning professionals to share ideas and supports for young children
- Encourage families to take advantage of family connection meetings and other opportunities to meet with their children's teachers and caregivers



## Snohomish County Early Learning Coalition using the Community Room.



## Lake Stevens School District Early Learning Center

In January we opened this amazing new facility. If you walk into our District's Early Learning Center, in addition to the smiles, you will notice a lot of intentional spaces and thoughtful design features, all with preschool aged students and early learning staff in mind. There are large windows with tons of natural light, small tables and chairs, incredible technology, and preschool sized bathrooms and sinks in each classroom.

As you walk into the center of the building you will notice two thoughtfully designed spaces. The first is our indoor play area. We believe that play is one of our most important teaching tools. Without it we diminish the curiosity, imagination, and motivation of our little learners.

The second area is our community room and possibly our favorite space. We believe that the early learning community is the heart of our building. In this space we host professional development opportunities for staff, parent education nights, Early Learning Center parent groups, and other district and community functions. This year we partnered with Imagine Children's Museum and utilized this space for science lessons. Our local police and fire department used this space to teach safety lessons to our students. With an amazing library program within our community, we have also hosted monthly library story times for our students in our community room.

As we have settled in, we are beginning to explore the full potential of these spaces. In the works is a Dinner and Dialogue to bring kindergarten and local early learning professionals together. Although we have hosted these in the past it has always needed to be held at another facility. Not anymore! Moving ahead, our only limitation might just be our imagination.



# Communities & Systems Ready & Successful

Ready and successful systems and communities have the resources and information needed to support expansion and excellence of programs and services for children, families, and schools, including: governance, financing, accountability, planning, and communication.

Data Indicator	Island	San Juan	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	State
Working poor (ALICE: Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed + Federal poverty level)	25.2% ↓	28.8% ↓	32.3% ↓	35.4% ↑	22.5% ↓	27.7% ↓
<i>Combined households below US poverty and those that earn over poverty level but less than basic cost of living:</i>						
Asian households	36.9%	76.4% ↑	50.2% ↑	41.3% ↑	38.2% ↓	35.6%
Black households	48.9% ↑	N/A	83.0% ↑	60.0% ↑	63.8% ↓	60.3%
Hispanic households	59.9% ↑	61.1% ↑	63.3% ↑	65.8% ↑	55.4% ↑	56.0%
White households	35.1% ↑	37.2% ↑	41.4% ↑	41.3% ↑	37.6% ↓	35.6%
Number of partner organizations affiliated with Northwest Early Learning	40 ↑	25 ↑	41 ↑	38 ↑	36 ↑	N/A
Participants at PreK-K Collaborative Network Dinner & Dialogues, Spring 2018	Coming Fall 2018	46 ↑	42	Coming Fall 2018	99 ↑	N/A

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## Fostering Resilience in Communities/Systems

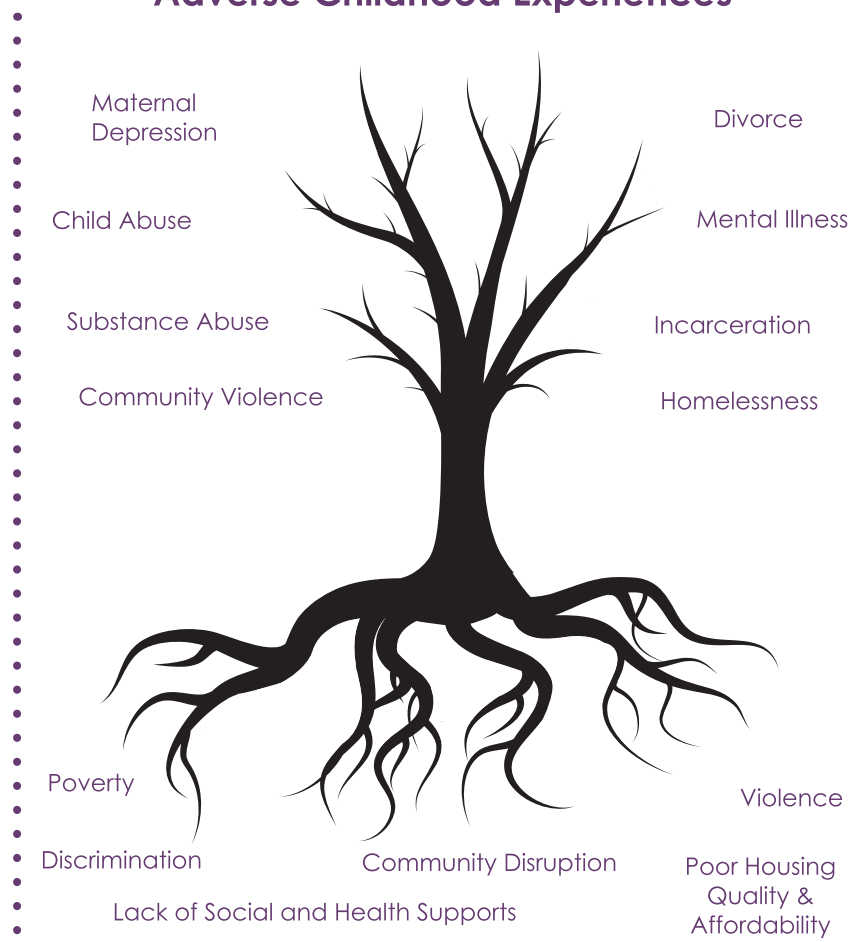
Communities can build resilience to trauma and protect against violence and poor health outcomes by shoring up social networks, social relationships and social norms across communities.

In early learning, there is a complex web of organizations, agencies, and individuals who must function as a collaborative system in order to build resilience in communities.

“These networks require sustained coordination, leadership, infrastructure, and communication support to work at the scope and scale necessary to have a positive community-wide impact” (Hargreaves, et al). With the help of Thrive Washington, Northwest Early Learning continues to function as one of the ten Early Learning Regional Coalitions in the state.

Sustainability of a system like this is essential, but it can also be a challenge. Because of dedicated professionals in each of our county’s Early Learning Coalitions, the Northwest Early Learning network is strong and continues to work toward sustainability and collective impact in our region. For more information about becoming a member of an Early Learning Coalition and helping build resilience in your community, contact your county coordinator (information can be found on the inside back cover).

## Adverse Childhood Experiences



## Adverse Community Environments

Source: Pair of ACEs Tree - <https://bit.ly/2sg7iEa>



## How You Can Help:

- Be a supportive friend or co-worker to parents of young children
- Advocate for family friendly policies and practices with your employer and local public officials
- Join your local early learning coalition
- Learn how you can support family resources in your community



### Dinner and Dialogues

Shared professional learning has been an effective and fun way to connect teachers and caregivers across early learning systems. One way that Northwest Early Learning supports this is by facilitating Dinner and Dialogue events in each county. Teachers and caregivers from preschools and kindergarten classrooms connect, review data from the Washington Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), and learn together about a variety of relevant and emerging topics connected to the data they've seen. Dinner and Dialogues also provide opportunities to share resources, research, concerns and celebrations, making professionals and systems better able to meet the needs of children and families.

### Supportive Childhood Experiences



### Supportive Community Environments



**From Left to Right:** Debra Lancaster (Executive Director of the United Way of Skagit County), Kristen Ekstran (Community Health Planner with the Population Health Trust), Cate Anderson and Mary Ellen Lykins (Co-Chairs of the Children's Council of Skagit County)



### Synergy

Synergy is the word most commonly used to describe efforts to nurture early childhood initiatives in Skagit County. Stakeholders including the Children's Council of Skagit County, the Population Health Trust (an advisory body to the Skagit County Board of Health), and the United Way of Skagit County have come together to focus on the first 1,000 days of life. More than 75 key leaders from these groups agree that in order to improve health and well-being over a lifetime, the best place to invest time and resources is at the very beginning.

Individually, these groups have been working toward improving outcomes for young children and families with the resources at hand. As a collaborative group they have come to the table and shared the work while staying involved with each other's individual initiatives. This approach ensures seamless connections and maximum collective impact.

What are the outcomes of these efforts? The Children's Council has expanded engagement and reached previously uninvolved members, who are now making an impact for our youngest community members. Strategic planning focusing on early childhood has taken place through the Population Health Trust "First 1,000 Days" workgroup, which completed a community-wide action plan. The United Way of Skagit County announced their bold goal that by 2025 all Skagit children entering kindergarten are ready to learn. A final outcome of this Skagit County-wide synergy is that the Children's Council will continue to work closely with the United Way and will support the Population Health Trust's action plan by aligning initiatives and moving the work forward. Stronger together!



# NW Early Learning Champion 2018



## **Bess Windecker-Nelson**

Bess Windecker-Nelson has been a shining star for children, families and the field of early childhood in our region and state. As a mother of three and a therapist with a PhD in Child and Family Relations, Bess brings a unique set of skills to our region and informs public policy on multiple levels. In the worlds of early childhood and family support, it is a rare gift to find someone who loves working with families, data analysis, and public policy equally.

In Island County, Bess advocates for families as a co-founder and convener of Partners for Young Children (the early learning coalition), a member of the Island County Children's Commission, and the Island County Mental Health Task Force. She coordinated the prenatal through third-grade alignment (P-3) efforts to help children be better prepared for school and life by engaging key partners in Island County school districts and early learning programs to come together in new ways and support literacy across early development. Her work for families has included a decade of coordinating Children's Day, founding of the first Play and Learn group, facilitating an Island-wide Universal Developmental Screening initiative and providing individual parent-child support.

At the regional level, Bess was a founding member of the Northwest Early Learning Coalition and instrumental in creating this publication, which is recognized as filling the need for advocacy across the state. Bess has a gift for bringing people together and making change happen through collaboration; families in northwest Washington benefit from her compassionate leadership.

## A Tribute to Joyce L. Sobel Champion for Children and Early Learning



When Joyce Sobel and her husband included their young son in the decision of where to relocate their family in the mid-1970's, their son chose San Juan Island. After spending years in Kenya and Chicago, the family moved to San Juan County in 1975. Our county and region instantly began to realize the tremendous impact of Joyce's commitment and dedication to children and early learning. Indeed, there are few in our community who were not touched in some way by Joyce's work and energy.

Joyce was an advocate, activist, mentor and spokesperson for those in our community without a voice. She spent countless hours supporting children and families in San Juan County as the Director of the San Juan Island Family Resource Center, and as an Early Learning Coalition member. Joyce was passionate about giving to her community, and strongly believed in collaboration. She pushed us all to do our best. Joyce was talented and nurturing in many ways – thinking big on policy and program planning, and also taking the time to connect with children and families in a way that was engaging, genuine and respectful.

While Joyce's passing has left a hole in the fabric of our community, her memory lives on and she continues to inspire us as we feel her presence in the multitude of ways she touched so many lives big and small. Funds donated in dedication to Joyce's legacy will be used to expand the San Juan Island Resource Center, which has been renamed the Joyce L. Sobel Family Resource Center, and will continue to support the center's free programs and services to the community.



## Your Local NWEL Contacts

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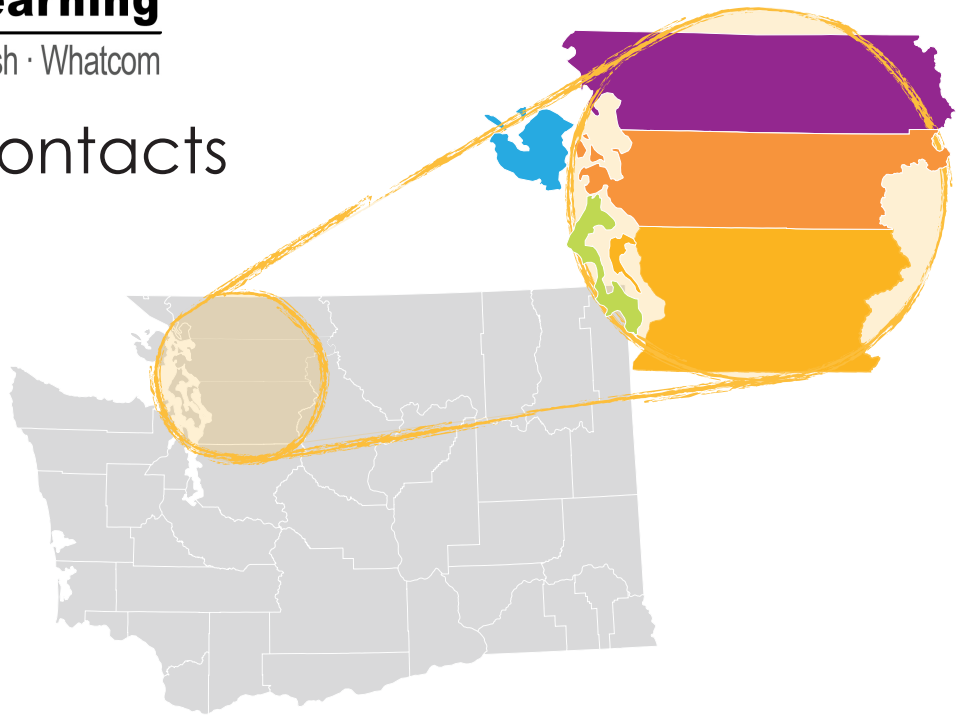
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## Who Are We?

Northwest Early Learning is made up of over 100 partners from around the region who serve and support children (prenatal-8) and their families.

We are drawing memberships from:

- Early childhood educators
  - Home visitors
  - School districts
  - Health professionals
  - Service organizations
  - Parent educators
  - Play and learn facilitators
  - Infant & toddler specialists
  - Military members
  - Tribe members
  - Law enforcement
  - Employers
  - Elected officials
  - Community leaders
  - Higher education
  - Parents and caregivers
  - Local Government
  - Libraries
- And many others

## Past Recipients

Karma Hugo, 2017  
Terry Clark, 2016  
Ray Soriano, 2015  
Vicki Hubner, 2014  
Joyce Sobel, 2013  
United Way of Whatcom County, 2012  
Sheriff John Lovick, 2012  
Cathy Niiro, 2012  
Sage MacLeod, 2012  
Sue Krienen, 2012

## You can be a champion for early learning too....

- Support family-friendly community events
- Show up for children and families (volunteer at local events, in classrooms and programs, pass along announcements)
- Share resources (time, talents, data, money)
- Speak up for children and families
- Talk to elected officials
- Vote for issues and candidates (from legislators to school board members) that support children and families
- Advocate for early learning (at your church, service organization, in your neighborhood)
- Encourage parents, both mothers and fathers
- Attend county early learning coalition meetings and share your ideas







## Acknowledgements & Resources

- ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) - [www.unitedwayalice.org/washington](http://www.unitedwayalice.org/washington)
- Childcare Aware of Washington - 2018 County Data Reports - <http://www.childcarenet.org/about-us/data/2018-county-data-reports>
- Childcare Aware of Washington - 2017 Data Report - <https://www.ccanorthwest.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2017-Data-Report.pdf>
- Department of Commerce - Affordable Housing Advisory Board - 2017 Affordable Housing Update - <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/ahab/>
- OSPI (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction) Washington State Report Card - <http://www.k12.wa.us/>
- Pair of ACEs Tree - [https://publichealth.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/Redstone-Center/Resource%20Description\\_Pair%20of%20ACEs%20Tree.pdf](https://publichealth.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/Redstone-Center/Resource%20Description_Pair%20of%20ACEs%20Tree.pdf)
- Public Health - Resilient Communities - The Building Community Resilience Collaborative - <https://publichealth.gwu.edu/departments/redstone-center/resilient-communities>
- State of Washington - Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) - Data and Reports - <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/enrollment.aspx>
- Strengthening Families: A Protective Factors Framework - <https://www.cssp.org/young-children-their-families/strengtheningfamilies/about#protective-factors-framework>
- Thrive of Washington - <https://thrivewa.org>
- United States Census Bureau - American FactFinder - <https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>
- Washington State Early Learning Plan - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/ELP.pdf>

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