



Program  
Year | 2019-20

# Early Learning and Family Services

Annual Report

## Essential Work



## Happens Here

## Leadership Team

---

**Greg Winter**  
Executive Director

**Sheri Emerson**  
Associate Director

**David Webster**  
Early Learning and Family Services Director

**F. Javier Flores**  
Data and Special Projects Manager

**Maureen Hodge**  
Birth to Five Services Manager

**Chelsea Johnson**  
Preschool Services Assistant Manager

**Wilanne Ollia-Perry**  
Quality Child Care Division Senior Program  
Manager

**Julie Wasilewski**  
Child Care Professional Development  
Coordinator/Early Achievers Lead

**Elaine Larson**  
Early Achievers Regional Coordinator

## Policy Council Leadership 2019-20

---

**Ashley Geist**  
Parent Policy Council Chair

**Anna Ashe**  
Vice Chair

**Jennifer Hill**  
Secretary

**Sara Hutchinson**  
Parliamentarian

## Report Team

---

**Amy Hickel**  
Birth to Three Services

**F. Javier Flores**  
Data and Special Projects Manager

**Kristine Wilson**  
Education Coordinator

**Rose Marcotte**  
Quality Child Care Division, Administrative  
Program Coordinator

**Tilda Doughty**  
Preschool Services Program Assistant

## Report Contributors

---

**Jessica Bee**  
EWRRC Coordinator

**Abigail Tankersley**  
Child Care Business Development Manager

**Ryan Beld**  
Accounting Manager

**Choice Meyer**  
Accountant I

**Peggy McCoy**  
Fiscal Technician



## Table of Contents

Department Overview and Mission .....	4
Accountability .....	5
Financials - Revenue and Expenditures .....	6
Director's Message – 2020, A Year in Review .....	8
Birth to Five Services.....	10
Quality Child Care .....	14
East Whatcom Regional Resource Center .....	17
School Readiness Efforts .....	19
Pivot to Virtual Learning and Family Services .....	20
Funding Sources and Collaborations .....	22

# Department Overview and Mission

---

Early Learning and Family Services (ELAFS) is a department of the Opportunity Council. Our programs focus on child and family wellbeing, and enhance the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social, and other services to enrolled children and families. We engage parents in their own children's learning and help them in making progress toward their educational, literacy and employment goals.

We work with parents, families, child care providers and early childhood educators, businesses and community organizations to promote the availability of high-quality early child care and education programs in Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties.

Additionally, we help parents and families find quality child care environments for their children, and assist child care providers in supporting every child's learning and development. The following are summaries of the many programs of ELAFS.

## **Our Mission**

The Opportunity Council (OC) helps people improve their lives through education, support, and direct assistance while advocating for just and equitable communities.

In support of the Opportunity Council's mission, the Early Learning and Family Services Department (ELAFS) ensures that all children and families have the knowledge, skills, and support for success in school and all future opportunities.

## **We are...**

- Committed to working with families and communities to increase access to quality early learning experiences and family support.
- Strong believers in families as the best resource for children, and
- Confident that healthy, resilient, well-educated children will be successful in the changing world of the 21st Century and beyond.

# Accountability

---

Monitoring the goals and activities of Early Learning and Family Services (ELAFS) is an ongoing process. Through the use of regular self-assessments, federal, state and local reviews, routine monitoring tools, site visits, and an annual fiscal audit, ELAFS maintains high quality programs and participates in continuous program improvements.

## **Audit Results**

The Opportunity Council is the grantee for all Administration for Children and Families-Office of Head Start funds, the USDA/OSPI Child and Adult Food Program, and State of Washington financial support, for ECEAP, Child Care Aware/Early Achievers, Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (Part C IDEA), and more. Annually, according to the grantee's fiscal year of January to December, the Opportunity Council has a financial audit conducted by independent auditors according to OMB Circular A-133, and 2 CFR Part 200. The financial audit for the grantee's Fiscal Year 2019, which covers half of the Early Learning and Family Services Department's 2019-20 contract year with ACF-OHS and State of Washington Department of Early Learning, was "unmodified" or absent of any findings.

## **Monitoring Report Results**

### **ECEAP and Child Care Aware Infant-Toddler Consultation Project (FIND)**

In the first quarter of 2019, the Washington State Department Children, Youth & Families conducted a monitoring review of the Opportunity Councils' ECEAP and Child Care Aware Infant-Toddler Consultation Project (FIND). This consisted of vendor and accounts payable transaction testing, payroll accuracy, procurement policies and practice, and cost allocation plan compliance. Results reported in August 2019 confirmed full compliance, there were no findings and no corrective actions required.

### **Quality Child Care – Early Achievers & Core Services**

In the first quarter of 2019, Child Care Aware of Washington conducted review of the Opportunity Councils' Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington program. This consisted of a review of data, systems, strategy, policy, community collaborations and outcomes. Results reported in August 2019 confirmed full compliance and there were no findings.

### **Early Support for Infants & Toddlers**

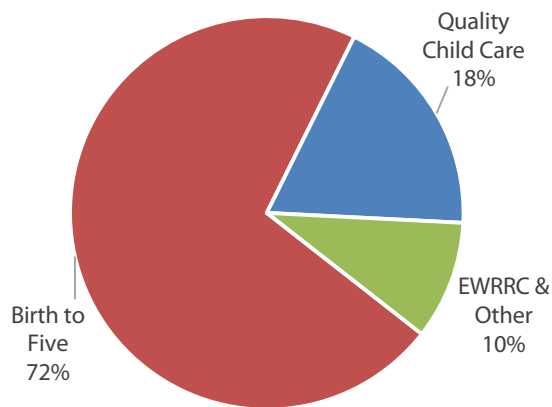
During February-March 2019 the Washington State Department of Children, Youth & Families conducted a monitoring review of the Opportunity Council's Early Support for Infants and Toddlers Program, which consisted of a direct survey of parents of ESIT-enrolled children to determine how well service providers meet the federal and state performance standards and customer satisfaction. The survey found that overall Whatcom County compares favorably to statewide data. ELAFS direct service team received the strongest marks among local providers, and the program was found in compliance on benchmarks and standards.

# Financials - Revenue and Expenditures

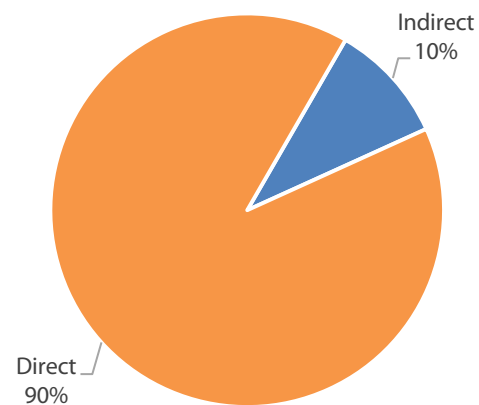
2019-20 Revenue	Amount
<b>Birth to Five</b>	\$9,565,973
<b>Quality Child Care</b>	\$2,461,602
<b>EWRRRC &amp; Other</b>	\$1,299,224
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13,326,799</b>

2019-20 Expenses	Indirect	Direct
<b>Birth to Five</b>	\$924,556	\$8,641,418
<b>Quality Child Care</b>	\$262,450	\$2,199,153
<b>EWRRRC</b>	\$23,971	\$199,762
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,210,977</b>	<b>\$11,040,333</b>

Program Revenue 2019-20



Program Expenses - 2019-20



## Division Revenue and Expenditures

Birth to Five Services	Total	Indirect	Direct
Early Head Start	\$539,532	\$57,807	\$481,725
Early Intervention (ESIT)	\$299,511	\$29,948	\$269,563
ECEAP (Early Childhood Education)	\$2,140,810	\$203,299	\$1,937,510
Head Start	\$2,832,190	\$262,624	\$2,569,566
Head Start Donations	\$183,071	\$19,615	\$163,456
Infant Toddler Early Prevention Programs	\$3,143,312	\$314,298	\$2,829,014
Lynden School District	\$75,101	\$6,440	\$68,661
USDA-Lunch Program	\$201,077	\$21,937	\$179,140
Whatcom County - SEAS	\$80,149	\$8,587	\$71,562
Whatcom County Intervention Services	\$71,220	\$0	\$71,220
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$9,565,973</b>	<b>\$924,556</b>	<b>\$8,641,418</b>

Quality Child Care and Support Services	Total	Indirect	Direct
CACFP (Nutrition Program)	\$51,287	\$5,495	\$45,792
Child Care Resource and Referral	\$2,049,346	\$218,676	\$1,830,670
Child Care Retention and Expansion	\$60,000	\$6,429	\$53,571
Child Care Shared Services	\$3,029	\$325	\$2,704
Fee for Service	\$56,848	\$6,091	\$50,757
QRIS	\$177,442	\$18,616	\$158,827
Teaching Strategies Gold	\$20,107	\$2,154	\$17,952
United Way - Vouchers	\$14,010	\$1,501	\$12,509
United Way - WELA	\$29,534	\$3,164	\$26,369
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,461,602</b>	<b>\$262,450</b>	<b>\$2,199,153</b>

Other	Total
ABC Dental	\$19,645
Early Head Start Non-Federal Share	\$179,163
Events/Private Donations	\$15,137
EWRRRC	\$223,733
Head Start Non-Federal Share	\$844,801
WECU X-it	\$16,746
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,299,223.96</b>

# Director's Message – 2020, A Year in Review

By David Webster, Director, Early Learning and Family Services

2020. It's a bit ironic that numbers which can mean perfect vision, really amounted to a year that practically no one saw coming. It was a year that brought great upheaval into the lives of the families we serve and into the lives of our dedicated staff who serve them. As we know now (as I write in early 2021), it was a year of monumental human suffering, both close to home and around the world. And it did not come to closure just because the calendar moved past December 31. Pandemics don't confine themselves to tidy dates; we adapt still.

Sadly, due to the ravages of COVID-19, our communities will now have many more children who will be lacking at least one set of loving arms in their life. Arms of those lost to the virus who would have otherwise been part of their network of support, sources of wisdom and protection, their cheerleaders, one of their many teachers. COVID's impacts, in other words, will linger for many days, weeks, even years ahead, in both seen and unseen ways.

And, of course, even with death evaded, the pandemic shook to the roots the financial footing for many of our families. Hours cut, jobs lost, businesses closed, all hit countless households across the income spectrum, but clearly some more severely than others. People with few resources before the pandemic often met devastation. People of modest means had to reach out for services they never imagined they'd need. The hard times magnified the health fear and made feelings of vulnerability common.

"Hola gracias por la oportunidad lo que a mí me gustó es a pesar de que se cerró la escuela las maestras siempre estuvieron pendiente de los niños llamaban todas las semanas para ver cómo estaban los niños"

*Hello, thank you for the opportunity. What I liked is even though the school was closed, the teachers were always thinking about the children and called them every week to see how they were doing.*

- Carmen, Head Start parent

"I am thankful for how hard the Head Start program at Sumas worked so hard to make sure my child got a good education. And how they kept the parent informed on what is going on in the classroom and in the school. Head Start helped me when things got tough and helped push through any problems that came up. They made teacher parent conference easy for parents who had hard time getting to the school!"

- Erin, Head Start parent

We shouldn't rush our children or ourselves through the wide range of feelings that 2020 created; yet, we shouldn't wallow in the negativity either. In fact, with the right lens, it's plain to see that the year's mounting losses were powerfully offset by the strength of the human spirit in innumerable ways. We saw so many step toward the tragedy rather than stepping aside to dodge its impacts. Health care workers and first responders, certainly, but also the child care workers and owners who were also there on day one providing quality care for the children of those essential workers. Many parents of the children we served were "up and at 'em" from the beginning as grocery store clerks, receptionists, custodians, deliverers of the avalanche of online purchasing that kept so many afloat. Our pre-school staff opened sites in addition to virtual services to reduce learning regression. Other staff innovated big time to go virtual with therapies, etc.



Parenting and caregiving are always about multi-tasking, but I have a new awe for the parents and caregivers of 2020, including those who work for us. They met COVID head-on while wearing many hats, until it began to subside --hopefully for good-- in the face of their courage and our community-protective behaviors.

To our ELAFS staff team in particular, but also to our peer departments and community allies, our agency administration and governance members, and to our many funders, thank you for your flexibility and creativity. And amidst the fray, thank you for your attention to what mattered, more than to the habits of how things used to get done. We needed your unwavering belief that even when the skies seemed the darkest, there was hope and there was "us." Together, we were a match for the 100-year crisis. We should wear the residual scars proudly.

The pages that follow will provide but a glimpse of what that hope and commitment produced. More than any other year, we present this Annual Report with grateful hearts and the assurance that we will keep on keepin' on for those who rely upon us and for each other.

"I have been simply amazed watching the Opportunity Council staff and Policy Council work this year to keep everything running so smoothly. So many people obviously mobilized to do the best for families in the programs. Quite frankly, the honest thoughts and information shared with the Policy Council is amazing. No wonder the parent participants sometimes 'grow' so much as a part of the experience. I am very honored to be a part of it."

- Elizabeth F., Policy Council  
Community Representative  
(volunteer)

"Many families were thankful for the meal and homework packet delivery during a time when many were out of work, locked down and didn't have a car to drive to the school for meal pick up.

One of our parents... organized to have [a local non-profit] deliver food to needy families in [our area]. Several families commented on how grateful they were for this. A food pantry evolved out of this."

- Tami P. Sumas Head  
Start teacher (staff)

"I was really grateful that Head Start valued my child's education and well-being during this difficult time in all of our lives. They checked in, made sure we were okay, and supported us in continuing to encourage our kiddos to learn, play and explore. I am so thankful for this program, my children have greatly benefited from it!"

- Nicole, Head Start parent

# Birth to Five Services

## Reflection on 2020 from Maureen Hodge, Birth to Five Manager

When I reflect on the 2019-2020 program year, I am humbled by the amazing, resilient and dedicated humans who work for the Birth to Five program. In every program from ESIT, to SEAS, Preschool to EHS, and every staff member who supports our front-line staff, all pivoted their work to meet the needs of our children and families. Almost all of our staff had to learn new skills of delivering services in a virtual world. They had to do this while taking care of their own family, teaching their own children and through this entire process, they did not skip a beat! The level of dedication is completely unheard of. I am in awe and feel privileged to lead this team.



We offered a summer classroom experience last summer to support a targeted group of preschool children and families in our Mt. Baker area. We had not offered this service in the past. This service kept children participating in their classroom work, and offered some families the ability to take care of other children and/or attend appointments and meetings, etc.

All of our home visiting programs, Early Head Start and Early Support for Infants and Toddlers, moved to delivering all of their services via Zoom! We lost very few families during this transition, and have actually grown both programs. Family engagement is high and I am appreciative of the hard work it has taken to sustain the parent, child and home visitor relationship.

SEAS, our program that navigates families with children who have a suspected developmental concern to local resources within the county, saw a small dip in referrals from last year. Our Navigators moved quickly to make sure they were following up, connecting with doctor's referrals, and getting back to families.

Lastly, we dedicated time and funding to our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion work. We committed to working on learning more, and doing better. We committed to participating whole heartedly in this work and being open to reflecting on our past/current practices. There were positives that came from the past year, including really identifying what the important things are, and that is people.



## Program Descriptions and Data

### Early Head Start

This federally-funded comprehensive child development program for families of low-income with infants, toddlers, and/or pregnancies, enhances children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development; assists pregnant people in accessing comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care; supports parents' efforts to fulfill their parental roles; and helps parents move toward self-sufficiency. It also features individualized planning and case management for children and parents. Services are provided in a home-based model.

#### Early Head Start 2019-20

Cumulative Enrollment:	97
Number of Funded Slots:	50
Average Monthly Enrollment:	100%
Number of Home-Based Slots:	50
Percent of Children w/Health Insurance at End of Enrollment:	93%
Percent of Enrolled Children with continuous accessible health care at End of Enrollment:	90%
Percent of Children with continuous, accessible dental care provided by a dentist:	74%
Percent of Enrolled Children who are Income Eligible:	99%

### Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT)

ESIT serves families with children birth to three years old who have special needs and need support to maximize each child's development for up to three years. ESIT provides early diagnosis and intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays in their natural environments, and includes family resource coordination, screening and evaluation to determine eligibility, ongoing assessment, and therapy services. The Opportunity Council served as the Local Lead Agency for Whatcom County.

#### Early Support for Infants and Toddlers 2020

Average New Referrals per Month	12
Average New/Initial IFSPs per Month	4
Total New IFSPs	44
Total Children Transitioned to Part B Services in School Districts	42
Total Children Transitioned Typically Developing	29
Total Children Transitioned for any reason	106

### Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)

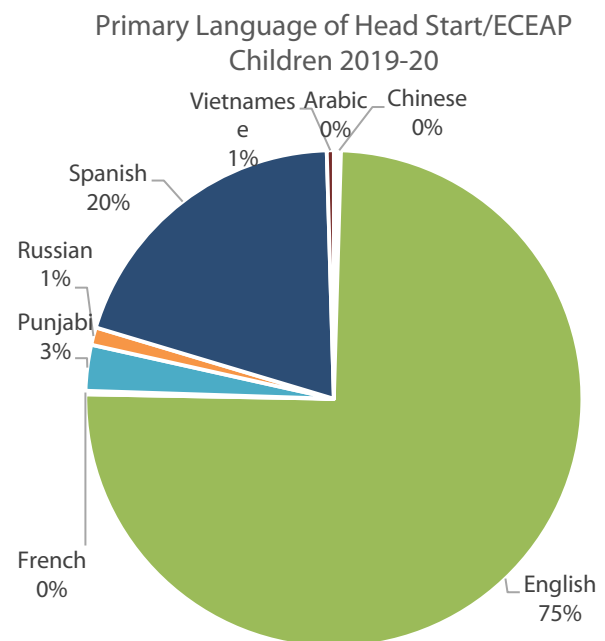
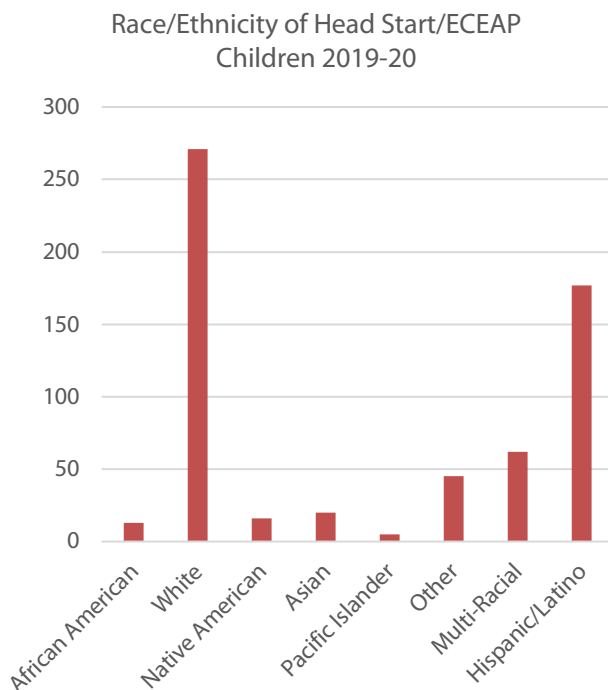
These federally and state-funded comprehensive preschool programs provide free services and support to eligible children and their families. The programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families. Our programs work systemically to assure alignment between prenatal to third grade services in our community (P-3 alignment).

Head Start and ECEAP engage parents in their children's learning and help them in making progress toward their educational, literacy and employment goals. Significant emphasis is placed on the involvement of parents in the administration of the program through the Parent Policy Council and other means. Included in parent preparation is the readiness to advocate successfully for their child in the K-12 system.

The goal of both programs is to help ensure all Washington children transition well and enter kindergarten ready to succeed. The program, which offers both part-day, full day and extended day options, includes:

- Early learning preschool
- Family support and parent involvement/leadership development
- Child health coordination and nutrition
- Linkages and referral to both other OC and community partners' services

Head Start and ECEAP 2019-20	ECEAP	Head Start
Cumulative Enrollment:	229	240
Number of Funded Slots:	174	238
Average Monthly Enrollment:	100%	100%
Number of Center Based Classrooms:	12	13
Meal Count: <sup>1</sup>	35,415	33,007
Percentage of Enrolled Children who are Income Eligible	72%	83% <sup>i</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Meal counts recorded Aug 2019 through March 2020

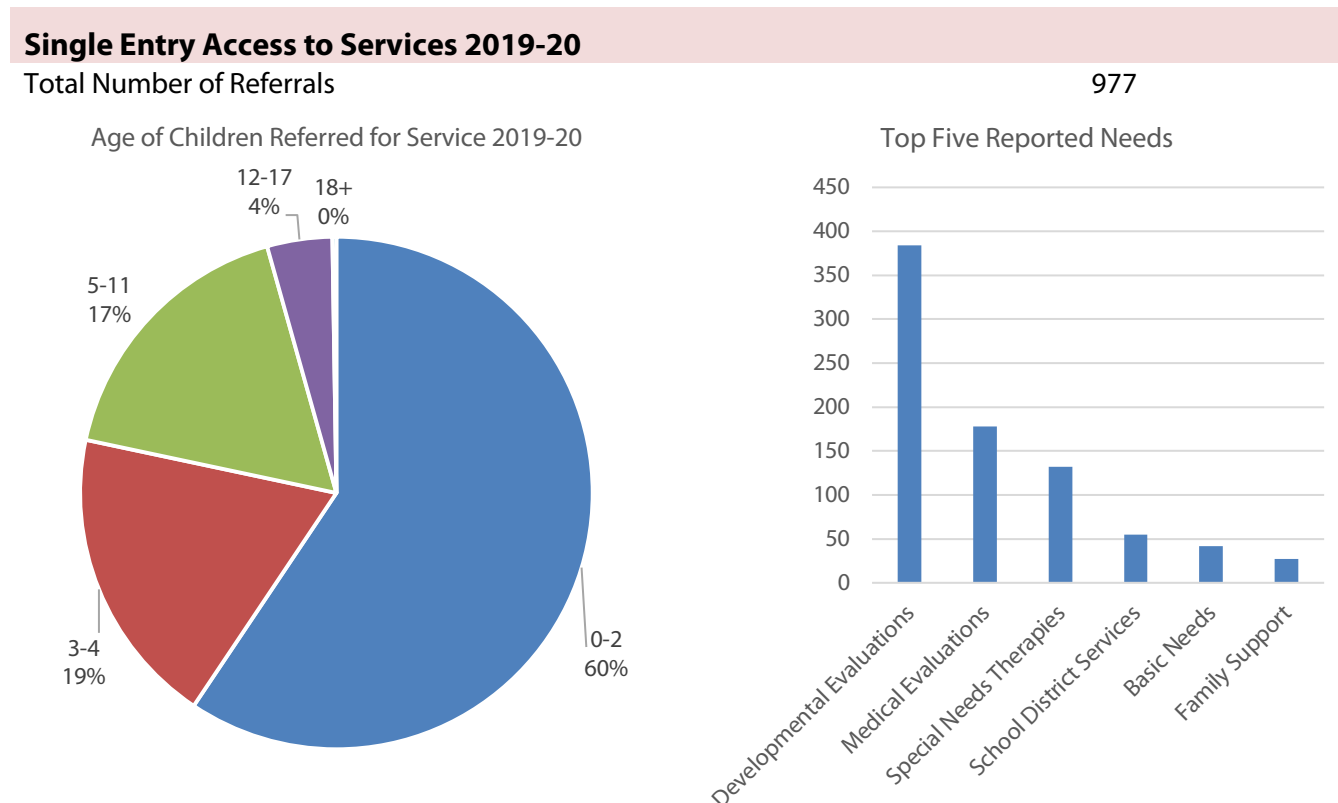
## Project X-it

Project X-it is an 18-month financial resiliency program for Head Start/ECEAP families. Project X-it features incentivized goal plans and dual-generational financial curriculum to aid Head Start/ECEAP families develop financial literacy. Families are matched with trained volunteer mentors from the community who act as financial partners to help plan goals and celebrate success. Financial learning and goal setting continue throughout the duration of the program, with an emphasis on participant driven curriculum.

Project X-it Cohort 2	Started February 2019 - Completed June 2020
Families Completed Program	4
Number of Goals – All participants	20
Amount Earned in Incentives	\$12,000

## Single-Entry Access to Services (SEAS)

Housed at Early Learning and Family Services, this program of Whatcom Taking Action provides a centralized intake system for families and medical professionals looking for services for children and youth in Whatcom County with known or suspected special needs.





# Quality Child Care

## Reflection on 2020, from Wilanne Ollila-Perry, Sr. Manager, Quality Child Care Division

During a year when COVID-19 changed the world, essential child care workers made tremendous contributions to our community from the onset of the pandemic, providing frontline services at their own great expense and personal risk when schools closed. Opportunity Council's Quality Child Care team stood with child care providers every step of the way. Overall, our team connected with more than 700 child care programs across five counties, providing emotional and tangible support on a weekly basis amidst everchanging guidelines. Early Achievers coaches hosted supply drive-throughs and personally delivered toilet paper, bleach, hand sanitizer, gloves, food boxes, and other critical supplies. Throughout the year, every team member helped problem-solve countless emerging issues for child care providers and families.



Despite the challenges, our team also successfully expanded services and transformed our programming to provide virtual coaching and professional development opportunities for early childhood educators. We launched a Business of Child Care training pilot, added a new Infant-Toddler Mental Health Specialist position to our team, and opened in partnership with the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce, the new Center for the Retention & Expansion of Child Care, which supported facilitation of over \$600,000 in grants to 62 child care providers to help them financially survive and keep their doors open. In addition, we continued to serve families in need through our Emergency Child Care Voucher program, serving scores of essential workers struggling to make ends meet.

As always, we remain committed to ensuring all children have access to high-quality child care and excellent learning opportunities during their critical developmental years. We also are forever grateful to generous community members and businesses throughout our five-county region that united with us in supporting early care and education providers during these unprecedented times of need.



## Program Descriptions and Data

### Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington

Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington is one of six regions across the state that works with families, educators, businesses, and community partners to advance high-quality early learning opportunities in child care settings. As part of a statewide network of child care information and referral services, Child Care Aware helps families learn about their child care options and how to locate high-quality child care that works best for their children. Child Care Aware also champions advocacy efforts to benefit children and families, increase the number of licensed child care businesses, expand access to high-quality child care, and improve supports for child care providers and early educators. In addition, Child Care Aware of Northwest Washington provides one-on-one coaching through and support through Early Achievers and professional development opportunities to child care providers in Whatcom, Skagit, Snohomish, Island, and San Juan Counties.

#### Early Achievers:

Early Achievers is a framework for improving the quality of early care in Washington. It provides a rating system for child care providers based on observable elements of quality that are optimal for kids. By participating in Early Achievers, early learning professionals show a commitment to improving quality in their programs. Early Achievers Coaches provide consultation, professional development training, and technical assistance to instill excellence in child care programs.

#### Supporting Child Care Providers

Providers receiving personalized, one-on-one COVID-19 support	686
Providers and teachers who received Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)	460
Providers Enrolled in Early Achievers	457

#### Professional Development Training

Total number of training hours	214
Total number of training participants (duplicated)	1,457

#### Kaleidoscope Play and Learn Groups (KPL):

Kaleidoscope Play and Learn groups help families prepare their children ages birth to age 5 for success in school and life. Child Care Aware of NW Washington supports expansion, advocacy, and data collection from KPL groups in its five-county region, reporting monthly to Child Care Aware of Washington and the Department of Children, Youth, and Family Services (DCYF). Child Care Aware of NW Washington is also the primary grantor for the seven Mother Mentors Playscape (KPL groups) throughout Whidbey Island.

#### QRIS Birth to Three Quality Initiatives

QRIS Birth to Three Quality Initiatives provides coaching and consultation services to infant and toddler programs enrolled in Early Achievers. Coaching builds on strengths, improves caregiver skills, and expands high-quality care for young children and their families. Areas of expertise include infant and early childhood mental health, developmental screening, onsite behavioral and mental health consultation, the Filming Interactions to Nurture Development (FIND) model of intervention, the

Infant and Toddlers Environmental Rating Score (ERS), and Infant and Toddlers Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

#### **Birth to Three Quality Initiatives**

Total of Infant-Toddler programs served by the FIND project	31
Total of Infant-Toddler programs connected with coaching and consultation	41

#### **Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Project**

Number of Focus Children	20
Number of providers/teachers who received consultation services	26

### **Emergency Child Care Voucher Program**

When parents cannot access child care, they cannot work. The Emergency Child Care Voucher Program provides temporary financial assistance to help families obtain or maintain high-quality, licensed child care during times of financial need. Child care vouchers prevent income loss for working families with low incomes, and help ensure children continue to receive high-quality child care when they need it most during critical developmental growing periods.

#### **Emergency Child Care Vouchers 2020**

Unduplicated families who received assistance	49
Unduplicated children who received assistance	70

### **Family Child Care Nutrition Program**

The Child Care Nutrition program is part of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a USDA federally-funded program to help family home child care providers serve nutritious meals to the children in their care. Child care providers enrolled in the program receive meal reimbursements, onsite coaching/ technical assistance monitoring, and nutrition education to promote healthy eating.

#### **Child Care Nutrition Program**

Total Reimbursed Meals:	150,071
Average number of Reimbursed Meals Per Month	12,506
Average Number of Children Served Per Month	413

### **Center for Retention & Expansion of Child Care - Northwest**

In 2020, Opportunity Council and the Bellingham Regional Chamber of Commerce joined forces to open the new Center for Retention & Expansion of Child Care NW (C-RECC NW). C-RECC NW exists to expand the region's market of child care providers by developing collaborative partnerships between business organizations and local communities across all sectors, while providing current and would-be child care providers with technical assistance, business and planning help.



# East Whatcom Regional Resource Center

---

## Reflection on 2020 from Jessica Bee, EWRRRC Coordinator

The East Whatcom Regional Resource Center has worked since September of 2011 to be a place where community thrives. However, 2020 tested that goal and our usual ways of meeting local needs. Through the effort of staff and volunteers the focus on serving communities of east Whatcom never wavered.

When it came time to close the EWRRRC doors for the safety of all, we did. However, with the commitment of our staff, we still maintained socially distant essential services by modifying to a “grab and go” model. We also started our Podcast which airs twice weekly with community voices sharing locally relevant information each week.



In late March Building 2 of the EWRRRC Campus was completed and the Foothills Food Bank began operating onsite using a drive through model. But even so, the Foothills Food Bank rose to the occasion as the pandemic began to make higher food insecurity waves, which for many working households began to submerge their hard-won buffer of economic safety.

We here at the EWRRRC laid down plans for a remote Kids Days of Summer program to show young people in the community how much we value and support their well-being. Besides weekly age-appropriate activities

delivered in partnership with the Mt Baker School District, we also provided ingredients for healthy meals. This was made possible through partnership with Common Threads and Christ the King Church. Our Summer VISTA, Noelle Beecroft, was a huge part of the success finding volunteers to pack activity kits, while also making weekly videos, activity pages and more.

After much work to prepare safety protocols, in October 2020 we reopened our doors for appointments for select socially distanced services. By Winter we had created a socially distant way to host art classes for the Foothills Community Art Project, and also hosted the first pop-up model of the East Whatcom Health Fair. We finished off 2020 with new lending laptops thanks to the generous donation from UnitedHealth and with a winter holiday giving tree project for 50 youth in the community thanks to the local Border Patrol staff and officers.

There is, of course, more to tell, as with any year of service but these highlights give a small sketch of the work of 2020 at the East Whatcom Regional Resource Center. It was a year of challenge but also one of hope as we all, as community, traverse the unexpected and often unsettled terrain of the COVID19 pandemic.





## Program Description and Data

The East Whatcom Regional Resource Center is a Whatcom County Parks facility, managed by the Opportunity Council and located in Maple Falls. The facility opened in September 2011, and provides space for a preschool program, youth and teen programming, community meetings, neighborhood events, private events, as well as a variety of information and resources and events throughout the year for residents in Eastern Whatcom County.

Number Served	Jan-March 2020	All 2020
Total New Visitors	86	117
Total Calls	567	764
Total Visits	275	921

Kids Days of Summer 2020	
Number of youth served	500
Number of partners involved	21
Number of volunteer hours	230
Pounds of fresh vegetables provided	2000
Number of teen volunteers	16
Number of activity packets provided	2400

Top Five Socially Distanced Services	Number of Service Instances
Community Engagement	356
Computer/Fax/Copy/Phone	262
Clothes	232
Food	210
Donation/Volunteer	106



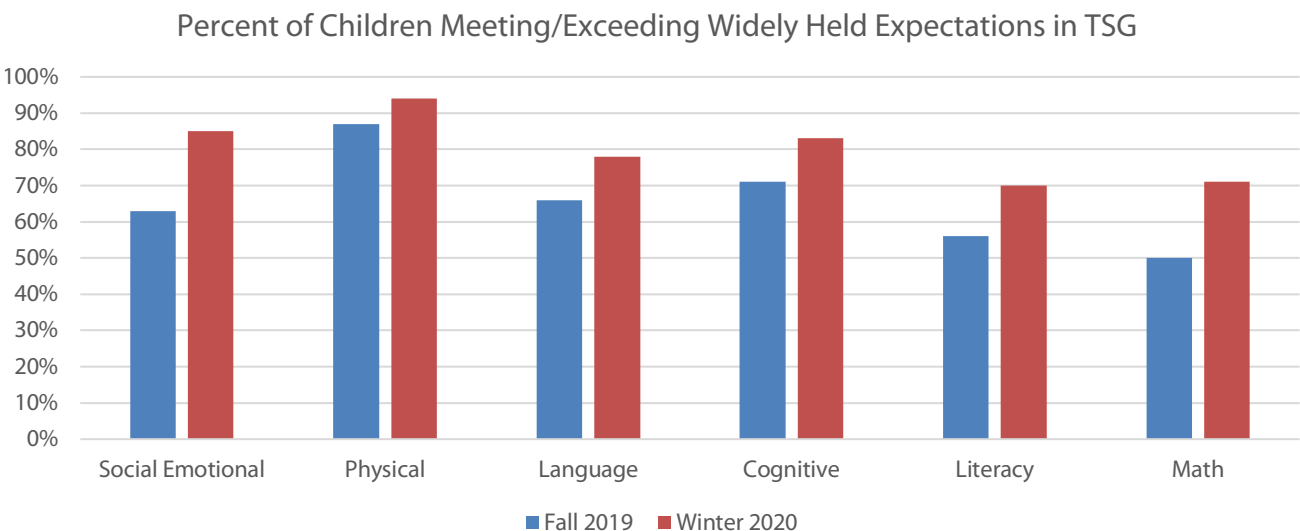
# School Readiness Efforts

ELAFS school readiness goals are based on collaborative efforts with local school districts toward Preschool-3rd grade (P3) alignment efforts. The agreed upon goals include all five domains required by the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework.

Head Start and Early Head Start programs are required to measure and report children’s progress based on the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework. The framework was developed to guide programs in curriculum planning and ongoing assessment of children’s progress and development. It includes seven general domains, and numerous domain elements relating to children’s skills, abilities, knowledge, and behaviors. Similarly, the Washington’s Early Learning and Development Guidelines (ELDG) have early learning outcomes that direct our work. Our program uses Teaching Strategies Gold (TSG), a valid and reliable research-based assessment, as our measuring tool. TSG has been cross-walked with both the Head Start ELOF’s and Washington’s ELDG, meeting all elements of both program requirements.

The 2019-2020 school year had its unique challenges to reliably measuring school readiness by TSG outcomes alone. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, spring outcomes were impossible to complete. Children were no longer attending classes, and teachers had to quickly pivot to providing as many home resources as possible to support both children and families as they navigated our communities’ closures. Parents had to quickly become adept at supporting their child’s learning solely at home without the ability to use other community resources that might otherwise be available to them under normal, non-pandemic times, such as libraries, and parks.

To look at school readiness we must look at other measures of success beyond just TSG outcomes, though looking at the limited outcomes we did get is valuable in getting a better picture of how the 2019-2020 cohort of kids fared. The chart below indicates the percent of children in Opportunity Council Head Start and ECEAP programs that were found to be at or above the widely-held expectations after only 6 months (Sept.- mid-Feb.), rather than the customary 10 months (Sept.-mid-June). ELAFS saw significant growth in all 6 domains. Especially in the areas of Social Emotional development and Math development, each making more than 22% gain in just 5.5 months.





# Pivot to Virtual Learning and Family Services

---

Although in-person programming was terminated in March of 2020 due to Washington's Covid-19 response, ELAFS did pivot to providing virtual services in conjunction with intensive coaching of parents on how to implement a robust learning program at home, as well as intensive social services supports to parents/families as they experienced their own losses due to the pandemic.

As summary of programming put into place for the remainder of the year includes:

- An immediate phone survey to assess of every family's access to:
  - Ability to do home academic activities
  - Childcare to maintain work status
  - Food
  - Internet
  - Need for Social Services supports
  - Tech equipment for zooming
- Each teacher created lesson plans, made materials packets, and delivered them home to parents so they could continue their kids' education services
- Each teacher conducted daily Zoom class; some did an additional Zoom per day for kids with special needs
- Weekly calls to homes were made to assess social service and education coaching needs
- Worked in conjunction with local food pantry's and school districts to deliver food to families who couldn't pick them up themselves
  - Box's delivered: 9,000
    - Between March and July approximately 6500 boxes were delivered to ECEAP and HS families.
    - Between July and October another 2500 boxes of food were delivered.
- Education materials and activity packets delivered to homes: est. 4,203
- Number of Zooms: est. 828
- Implemented a summer education program to continue to support kindergarten-bound kids until they moved to elementary school: 86 kids served all summer
- Number of coaching/social services calls made to homes: est. 4,670
- 300 community-donated cloth masks given to families.
- Mental Health services: 10 referrals were requested by families, 3 families followed through with receiving services.



## Policy Council (PC)

Policy Council the parent-led governing body that works in conjunction with Head Start, Early Head Start, and ECEAP staff, community members and the Opportunity Council Board of Directors in planning and operating our home- and center-based early learning programs.

2020 started like any other year, with parent volunteer PC Representatives attending monthly in-person meetings. PC was unable to meet in March due to the quickly changing nature of the pandemic, but by April was back to meeting monthly on-line via Zoom—and barely missed a beat! Parent participation was key in keeping our program moving forward for the remainder of an unprecedented school year.

Every year in the spring, PC hosts a free event for all enrolled families with a theme such as fitness or STEM. This year, with an in-person event not possible due to Washington state's stay at home order, PC instead coordinated a postcard project so that our students could stay in touch with their teachers, classmates, or extended family—or send a picture and message to local first responders, health care workers or nursing home residents.



# Funding Sources and Collaborations

---

In addition to these key funders and collaborators, ELAFS is proud to also benefit from the support of other local private and community foundations, as well as individual donors who support our work.

Child Care Aware



Chuckanut Health Foundation



Head Start



Mount Baker Foundation



North Sound Accountable Communities of Health



United Way of Whatcom County



USDA



Washington State Dept. of Children, Youth & Families



Washington State Dept. of Commerce



Whatcom Community Foundation



Whatcom County



Whatcom Educational Credit Union



Whatcom Taking Action

