Safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments are essential for the health and well-being of children and families. Healthy relationships serve as protective factors for children, and help them learn, grow, make healthy decisions and thrive. We believe every child should have this opportunity.

However, there are children in our state who experience poverty, trauma, violence, child maltreatment and other childhood adversity. These experiences can cause toxic stress and have a cumulative effect throughout life. They can affect children’s brain development, learning ability, lifelong health and well-being. Fortunately, strategies that promote safe, stable, nurturing relationships and environments can prevent some adverse experiences and toxic stress, limit their impacts, and promote resilience.

WASHINGTON STATE’S INITIATIVE
Using a collective impact approach, partners across sectors are coming together to create the context for healthy children, families and communities. A collective impact approach is guided by a common agenda. The common agenda is a common understanding of the problem and a shared vision for change.

The Essentials for Childhood Common Agenda

OUR VISION
All children in Washington State thrive in safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments.

OUR COMMITMENT
To promote safe, stable and nurturing relationships in families, communities, and early learning and school environments. By 2025, this leads to measurable and significant improvements in children’s health, development and education outcomes and eliminating equity gaps. Our initial work focuses primarily on our state’s youngest and most vulnerable children and their families.

OUR STRATEGIES
- Educate and motivate key stakeholders on brain science, adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and resilience
- Transform systems and services to prevent and mitigate the impact of trauma
- Align systems to enable family-centered service provision
- Support community ownership, impact and action
- Improve data sharing and use across systems
- Spark innovative policy and financing solutions

OUR PRINCIPLES
- Bold, innovative
- Population-level, statewide
- Addresses inequities
- Emphasis on prevention
- Assets-based
- Evidence-driven
- Builds on existing work
- Cross-sector
- Community-informed
OUR INITIATIVE’S STRUCTURE

Strategic guidance and support

Steering Committee

Backbone Organization
Department of Health
Department of Early Learning

Partner-driven action

Data Workgroup
Community and Stakeholder Education and Action Workgroup

Community Partners
Families
Business Owners
Faith-based Community Organizations
Non-profit Organizations
Providers
Philanthropic Organizations

Public agencies

Systems, Services and Implementation Workgroup
Innovative, New Policy and Financing Solutions Workgroup

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Indian Health Commission
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Washington
Broetje Orchards/First Fruits
Casey Family Programs, Systems Improvement Unit
Center for Children and Youth Justice
Children’s Alliance
Community Café Collaborative of Washington
Department of Early Learning

Department of Health
Department of Social and Health Services, Children’s Administration
Empire Health Foundation
Fight Crime: Invest in Kids
Foundation for Healthy Generations
Health Care Authority
Office of the Governor
Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
Parent Trust for Washington Children
Partners for Our Children

Reach Out and Read Washington State
ReadyNation
Regence Blue Shield of Washington
Scientific Advisor, Dr. Maxine Hayes
Thrive by Five Washington
Thurston County Prosecutor’s Office
University of Washington, Center for Child and Family Well-Being
WA State Association of Public Health Officials

CONTACT
Marilyn Gisser, MSHA | Essentials for Childhood Coordinator | Washington State Department of Health
(360) 236-3503 | marilyn.gisser@doh.wa.gov

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