

# State Children & Families



**Northwest Early Learning**

Island · San Juan · Skagit · Snohomish · Whatcom

Report 2015

# State of Children & Families

Founded in 2005, Northwest Early Learning (NWEL) is an early childhood system planning initiative representing over fifty organizations across Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom Counties.

In an effort to better understand the progress we are making toward our vision that all children have high quality early care and learning experiences that support optimal growth and development leading to success in school and life, NWEL created the State of Children and Families report.

The report provides demographic and programmatic data to illustrate key components of our early learning systems. Priority Actions describe local issues and community responses. This year we've added stories of local families and professionals who are raising young children and building their lives in the region.

## Get the Most from the Report

This report is organized by the Washington Early Learning Plan (ELP) Ready & Successful Framework:



For information about the Early Learning Plan online go to <http://www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/elac/elp.aspx>



NWEL has adopted the ELP Ready and Successful Framework as a roadmap for building a comprehensive, coordinated and effective early learning system across our five counties.

**Arrows:** Up and down arrows (▲ ▼) indicate the data value has increased or decreased over the previous year. No arrow indicates no change or that the data is new in this report.

**Sources:** Data included in the State of Children and Families report was 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 direct information about the children and families they serve. We also refer to state data sources.



View the complete data sources, terms and definitions on the NWESD website at <http://tinyurl.com/socf-data>. Scan the QR codes below each table to view sources with your mobile device.



# Regional Indicators of Health and Well-Being

*achieving positive life outcomes*

Healthy Families

Prepared Workforce

Healthy Communities

8.4%

Teens not in school and not working



78%

of students graduate on time



Juvenile Detention admissions last year

2918

76%  
Reading at grade level in 3rd grade



WaKIDS

Ready and Successful children enter kindergarten meeting or exceeding standards in six key areas

45%

Kindergarteners who demonstrate all six characteristics



Social-Emotional Physical Literacy Language Cognitive Math

Regional efforts are aligned with national priorities to increase school readiness, reading scores, and graduation rates while reducing juvenile detention and drop-out rates in order to promote healthy families, workforce development, and healthy communities.



# children

READY & SUCCESSFUL

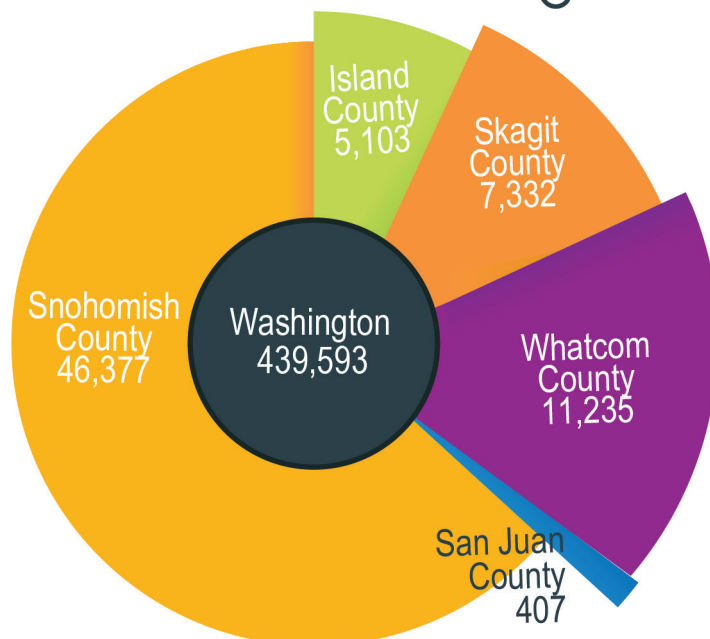
Ready and successful children are healthy and socially, emotionally, and cognitively prepared for success in school and life.

Data Indicator	Island	San Juan	Skagit	Snohomish	Whatcom	State
Children under 6 living in extreme poverty	6.6% ▼	13.1%	8.6% ▼	7.2%	9.9% ▲	8.8% ▼
Children served by Children's Administration	7.2% ▲	4.6% ▲	9.8% ▲	6.6% ▲	9.9% ▲	7.7% ▲
Children with special needs, birth to 3, served by Individual Family Service Plans (ESIT)	283	10	163	1,399	362	13,686
Children in foster care	70 ▼	>10	140 ▼	658 ▼	322 ▲	8,942 ▼
<i>Kindergarteners meeting or exceeding standards at Fall 2014:</i>						
Social-Emotional standards	81% ▼	93% ▼	71%	78% ▼	79% ▼	74% ▼
Physical standards	74% ▼	98% ▲	85% ▲	84% ▼	85% ▼	78% ▼
Literacy standards	91% ▼	98% ▲	75% ▼	83% ▼	89% ▲	79%
Language standards	78%	95%	72%	73%	82%	70%
Cognitive standards	79%	100%	78%	76%	84%	74%
Math standards	53% ▼	86% ▲	50% ▼	59% ▼	65% ▼	53% ▼
8th graders with depressive symptoms	29% ▲	24%*	30% ▲	28% ▲	28% ▲	26%
On-time graduation rate, public schools	82% ▲	83% ▲	71%	78% ▲	75% ▼	77% ▲



Scan for data sources and definitions,  
or visit <http://tinyurl.com/socf-data>.

## Children Under Age 5



### Making Early Learning a Priority

The early years, prenatal through age eight, are increasingly recognized as foundational to a child's long term health and achievement, with significant implications throughout the life span. Even before birth, we are adapting to the world around us. Whether traumatic or calm, early experiences get wired into our brains. When families struggle to secure essentials like food, shelter, clothing and health care or encounter a crisis such as job loss, illness or domestic violence, the whole family is at heightened risk for a cascade of negative outcomes. Knowledge of parenting, social connections and the social-emotional competence of children supports more positive social adjustment, higher academic attainment, greater economic returns, improved health, and reduced crime.



## Prenatal Care

Mothers receiving prenatal care  
in the first trimester

WA State	69%
Island	75%
San Juan	70%
Skagit	66%
Snohomish	67%
Whatcom	72%

## Medicaid Births



WA State  
51%



Island  
35%



San Juan  
66%



Skagit  
62%



Snohomish  
42%



Whatcom  
51%

## Receiving Early Intervention

Children with special needs, birth to 3

Island County  
283 Children

San Juan County  
10 Children

Skagit County  
163 Children

Snohomish County  
1,399 Children

Whatcom County  
362 Children

Washington  
13,686 Children



## Early Intervention: Oak Harbor family finds small victories in early detection

On his first night home from the hospital, Erin Stuart noticed something was wrong with her son, Liam. He was screaming nonstop, becoming rigid, wasn't latching and hated being swaddled. Stuart thought, "I know I'm a new mom, but something just doesn't feel right."

Luckily, the Stuarts were encouraged to seek developmental therapy through the Toddler Learning Center. "That was a scary call to make," Stuart said. But when Liam finally got his diagnosis, it was a turning point. "It put us on the path to getting the therapy he needed."

Starting with feeding, the Stuarts learned how to retrain their son through sensory exercises. Once swallowing was down, they moved on to other developmental problems like sitting, crawling and grasping. "As an outside person, you wonder, 'Is this really going to do anything?'" Stuart said. But the therapy did yield results over time. "Every time we addressed his sensory needs, he would go from doing nothing to excelling," Despite his progress, Liam still struggles with emotional and social situations. "Autism doesn't go away," Stuart said. "It's not something that you grow out of." However, people with autism can learn coping skills to help them be as typical as possible.

Three years after that long, frustrating night, Stuart and her husband, Rob, have come a long way. Stuart uses her experience to advocate for early intervention programs. "I think it made the biggest difference," Stuart said. "I don't think he'd be doing as well had we not caught it early. If he was diagnosed later, it would be totally different."





# 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
# of households with children under age 6	1,898	315	2,592	20,670	4,438	187,953
Unemployment (annual)	7.7%	5.9%	8.3%	5.8%	6.9%	7.0%
Families served by Women Infants & Children (WIC), a supplemental nutrition program	3,093	398	6,457	23,266	7,333	307,080
Children with special needs, birth to 3, served by Individual Family Service Plans (ESIT)	283	10	163	1,399	362	13,686
Children participating in the Basic Food Program	24%	26%	45%	28%	33%	35%
Number of spaces available in Early Head Start, including migrant and tribal	14	0	63	156	108	2,624
Teen birth rate (15-17 years)	4 per 1000	<5 per 1000	9 per 1000	6 per 1000	7 per 1000	9 per 1000
Teen pregnancy (15-19 years)	69	4	143	650	209	7,483
Homeless families by county	334	<35	628	2,966	1,043	N/A



Scan for data sources and definitions, or visit <http://tinyurl.com/socf-data>.

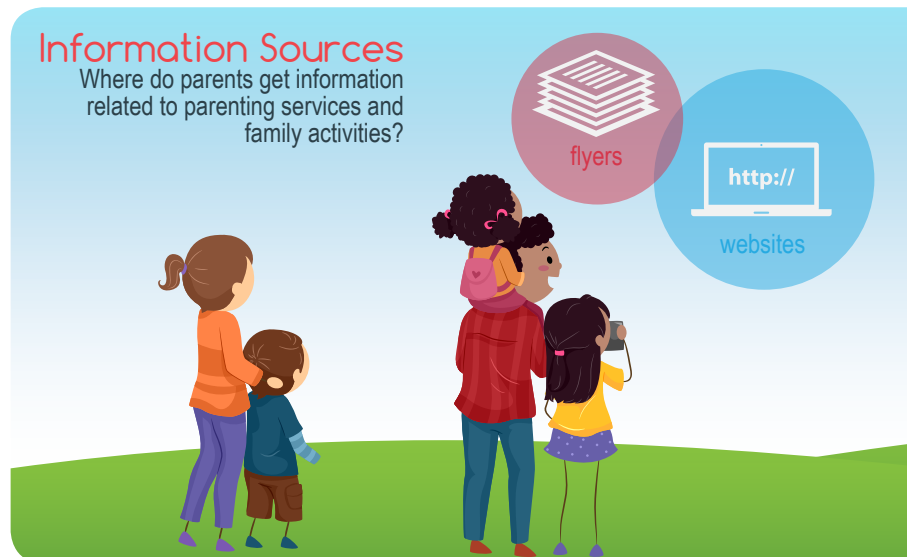
## Getting the Best Start Possible

All children deserve the best possible start in life. High quality early care and education are essential. Even before pregnancy, families can learn about and take steps to support optimal development for their child. We heard directly from families through a recent survey conducted in Skagit County that the wide majority of families want more parenting education and information. We know that parenting supports and education can help families and children thrive, even in the face of adversity. Health care professionals, home visitors, playgroup facilitators, child care providers and Early Childhood Educators are in a unique position to support families during critical windows of child development.



## Information Sources

Where do parents get information related to parenting services and family activities?



# Kaleidoscope Play & Learn

Established Playgroups in Island, Snohomish, & Whatcom

**Island**  
331 Children  
335 Adults



**Snohomish**  
272 Children  
200 Adults



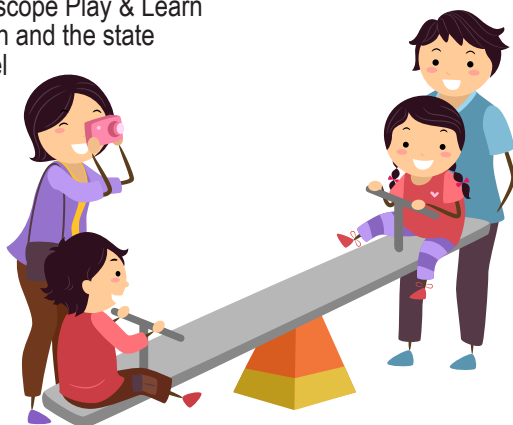
**Whatcom**  
114 Children  
92 Adults



Held in neighborhood schools, churches, maternal health centers or wherever it is convenient, playgroups can offer children a high-quality early learning experience, similar to preschool, while caregivers increase their knowledge of child development and their social networks.

While all counties in the region have playgroups, NWEL has identified **the need for more play and learn opportunities** for caregivers. Kaleidoscope Play & Learn is gaining momentum across our region and the state as an evidence-based playgroup model showing positive outcomes.

To hear stories about *Play and Learn* programs, view this video developed by the Ferndale School District:  
<https://vimeo.com/128207171>.



## ***Padres Todos Juntos*** Friends together

Lack of Spanish language services, unpredictable income and isolation – both geographic and social – are issues that can make parenting very stressful for low-income Latino families living on San Juan Island. In recent years, the percentage of children in the San Juan Island School District who come from Spanish speaking families has doubled and continues to grow.

*Padres Todos Juntos*, a new program funded by the Washington State Department of Early Learning and implemented by the San Juan Island Family Resource Center, reaches out to Latino families with babies and young children, providing an array of services based on the Strengthening Families protective factors. Families are provided with free transportation to attend twice-weekly playgroups led by a bilingual Parent Mentor, go on local field trips, and attend weekly parenting classes. *Padres* also serves as a gateway for informing Spanish-speaking parents about critical services that are available for their children, such as affordable health care and the local Head Start program. Most importantly, the program focuses on the simple idea that building supportive friendships with other parents is a powerful means of reducing stress and creating healthier, happier families and children.

Lily, a 20 year old first-time mother, has this to say about her participation in the program: "It makes a big difference to be able to get together with other moms that I totally trust and just be able to talk and even laugh about everything – the good things about having a baby and also the really stressful things. It makes me feel less alone and less worried about whether I'm doing a good job of being a mom."



# professionals

READY & SUCCESSFUL

Ready and successful professionals are prepared and have the knowledge and responsiveness 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 age 6 with all parents in the workforce	60.8%	not available	55.7%	58.7%	57.7%	59.5%
Number of spaces in state-funded preschool (ECEAP)	108	38	90	1,137	143	10,091
Number of spaces in federal-funded preschool (Head Start), including migrant and tribal	58	15	494	546	596	13,998
Licensed child care providers/programs	41 ▼	7	102 ▼	521 ▼	98 ▲	5,272
Number of spaces available in licensed child care (family homes & centers)	858 ▲	205 ▼	2,205 ▼	13,665 ▲	2,464 ▲	141,439
Number of spaces available for infant care in licensed child care (family homes & centers)	94	8	272	1,490	286	16,124
% of licensed child care providers enrolled in Early Achievers	41%	71%	49%	33%	63%	46%
Number of Regional Transition Reports shared between preschool and kindergarten teachers	174 ▲	25 ▼	283 ▲	641 ▼	322 ▲	N/A

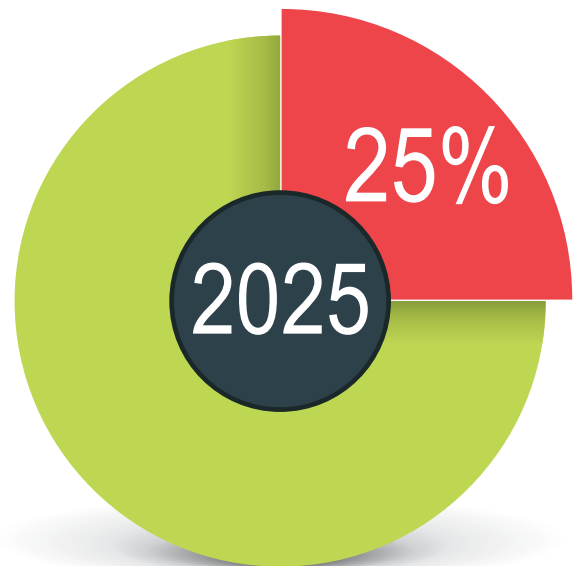


Scan for data sources and definitions, or visit <http://tinyurl.com/socf-data>.

## English Language Learners

### The Very Best Teachers for the Very Best Start

Over the next several years, our state will need many more qualified early learning teachers. Two major initiatives are increasing this focus: The **Early Start Act**, which includes the expansion of state-funded preschool and increased teacher qualifications and **State-funded Full-day Kindergarten**. Additionally, Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) anticipate program expansion, teacher turnover and increased educational requirements. Our regional institutions of higher education are working to keep up with demand while developing the best teachers possible. Western Washington University offers a dual endorsement in elementary education and P-3 so graduates are eligible to work in childcare centers, ECEAP, Head Start and primary grades. Whatcom, Skagit, Edmonds and Everett Community Colleges are offering Opportunity Grants to child care and preschool staff enrolled in Early Achievers (EA), a quality rating system that empowers early learning professionals through program improvement. Watch *Support for Working Professionals in Early Childhood Education* to see personal stories: <https://tinyurl.com/socf-data>.



By 2025: 25% of all students enrolled in U.S. K-12 schools are projected to be ELLs



# Forecasting a Teacher Shortage

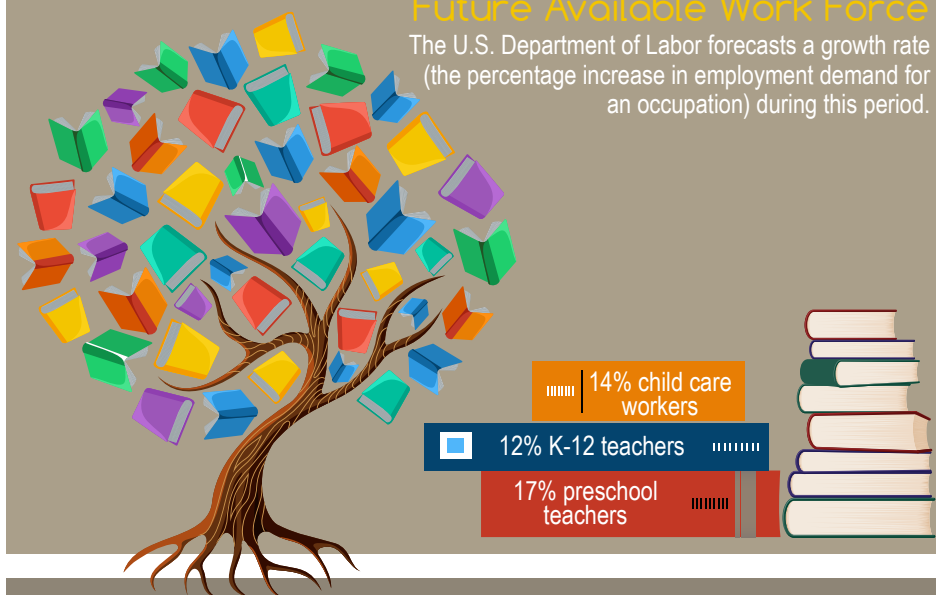
## Future Job Openings

The U.S. Department of Labor forecasts, between 2012 and 2022, "replacement needs" (the percentages of estimated job openings resulting from the flow of workers out of an occupation) of:



## Future Available Work Force

The U.S. Department of Labor forecasts a growth rate (the percentage increase in employment demand for an occupation) during this period.



## Future Demand

To meet the demand generated by proposed expansions of public preschool programs, approximately 100,000 additional preschool teachers with bachelor's degrees will be needed by the end of this decade.



## Giving Kids a Head Start

Brianda Tzintzun was just three years old when her family moved to Skagit County from Mexico. She vividly remembers riding a two-person bike around the playground at Head Start, where her parents enrolled her. "The teachers were so caring!" she recalls. More than 22 years later, Brianda is back at Head Start! This time, she is working as an Infant Toddler Specialist for Skagit/Island Head Start, leading a bilingual classroom of busy toddlers.

Brianda sees firsthand how children and families benefit. "I want people to know that Head Start is an amazing program. It is life changing... for children and families! Head Start is literally a head start – in learning and life".

Celebrating 50 years of service in 2015, Head Start programs support the comprehensive development of children from birth to age five. Head Start services include early learning, health, and family well-being. Since its inception, national Head Start has served over 30 million children and their families.

Having grown up speaking Spanish, Brianda is especially grateful that her dual language Head Start experience prepared her for English-only kindergarten. She thinks that helping children who are in the minority is critically important and wants to see them be successful, to graduate high school and have a career. "If we get to them when they are young, they will do it..." She encourages everyone who is eligible to apply for Head Start. "Whoever is able to be in the program is very lucky, just as me and my family were."



# 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	7,930 ▼	1,925 ▼	18,832 ▼	108,807 ▼	26,177 ▼	1,061,056 ▲
Number of school districts	3	4	7	14	7	286
Number of elementary schools	7	5	25	107	31	35,641
Number of elementary schools participating in WaKIDS 2014	1	3	19	41	24	623
Kindergarten enrollment, public schools	603 ▼	144 ▲	1,465 ▲	7,892 ▼	1,940 ▼	81,206 ▲
Districts that submitted kindergarten entry data (WaKIDS) fall 2014	1	2	5	10 ▲	5 ▲	193 ▲
Free & Reduced Lunch enrollment	38%	45%	52%	38%	41%	45%
Transitional Bilingual - English Language Learners	204	93	2,690	10,350	1,775	102,339
3rd graders meeting or exceeding MSP/WASL math standards*	64%	73%	60%	67%	64%	65%
3rd graders meeting or exceeding MSP/WASL reading standards*	75%	84%	70%	75%	76%	73%
Students from low-income households who graduated high school in four years	72% ▲	77% ▲	60% ▲	67% ▲	63%	66% ▼
# of districts in the region that accepted Regional PreK-K Transition Reports	3	3	5	11	7	N/A



Scan for data sources and definitions, or visit <http://tinyurl.com/socf-data>.

\* Some schools piloted a new standardized assessment, Smarter Balance. For regional continuity, only MSP scores from 2013 are presented.



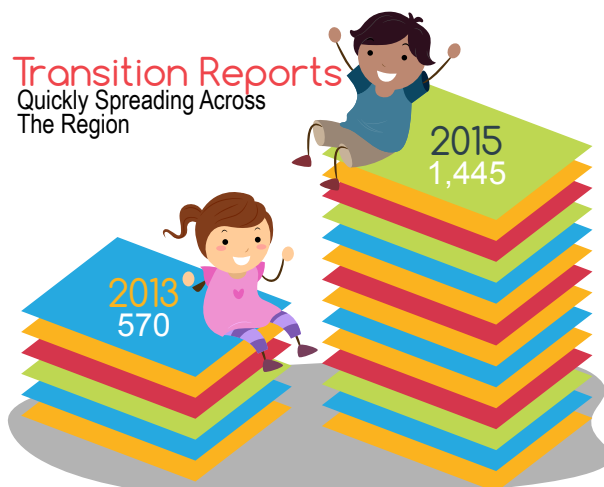
## School Ready: Making the Transition to Full-day Kindergarten is a Collaboration

While each grade in school is important, many things make kindergarten special, including forging "school readiness" partnerships with the early learning community. In June 2015, the Legislature passed a budget that increased funding for full-day kindergarten to 71.88% of students starting in 2015-16. By 2016-17, all children will have access to full-day K. To help make this transition more successful for children and families, teachers around the region developed the PreK-K Transition Report. PreK teachers use the report

to target key areas of development and share it with families to help them see what skills their children are gaining. The report then goes on to K teachers who learn about children in advance and prepare to best support them. To hear local teachers talk about their collaboration, check out *Connecting PreK & Kindergarten* video online at [https://www.nwescd.org/early\\_learning/p3](https://www.nwescd.org/early_learning/p3).

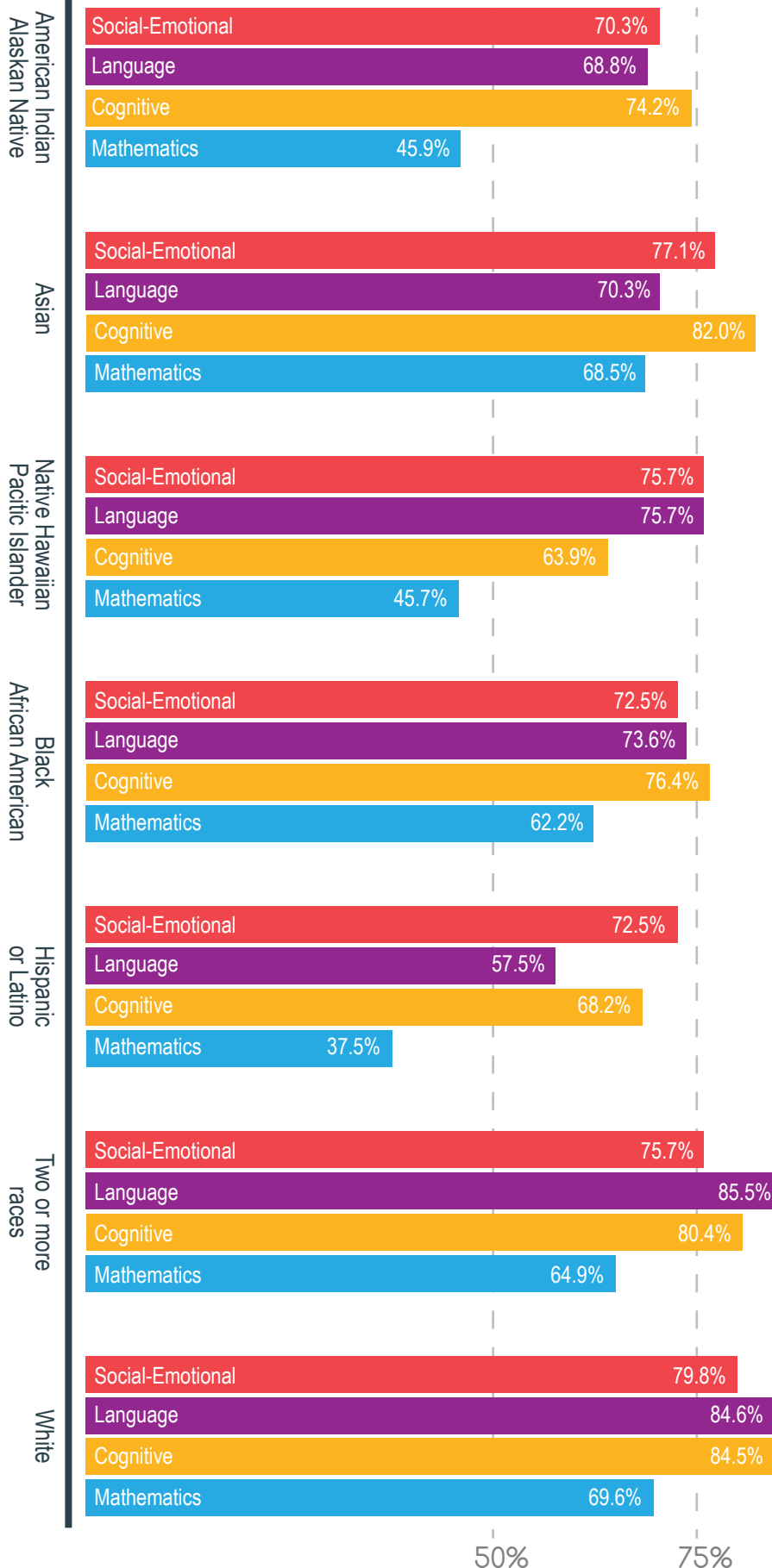
## Transition Reports

Quickly Spreading Across The Region



## Entering Kindergarten

% of regional students demonstrating characteristics, by race and ethnicity



### The Bellingham Promise

Bellingham Public Schools, over the last five years, has created a new strategic framework called *The Bellingham Promise*. The Promise is a collective commitment of the entire school district, as well as our broader community, that we will do all we can on behalf of our children...whatever it takes to help ensure all kids discover and develop a passion, contribute to their community, and ultimately, achieve a fulfilling and productive life.

We have five key strategies that drive our work, one of which is a commitment to early childhood education. The Promise states that "we invest in a strong early childhood (prenatal to third grade) program because of its powerful long-term return for our students and community."

Specific actions have included the creation of a Director of Early Childhood Education, supported by an Early Childhood Teacher on Special Assignment. We are about to enter our fifth year of having full-time kindergarten for all students at all schools. The school day was expanded to 6.5 hours per day and students have access to specialists in physical education, music and library. We started Promise K, a program that targets low-income students who have not had access to an early childhood program and need an extended-year kindergarten experience. We have also expanded our GRADS early childhood/teen parenting program. We have transformed our district from a K-12 system to PreK-12.

Early childhood is one of our best investments long-term, both as a district and as a community, to ensure every student is ready for and successful in school.



# communities

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.*



## Leading for Early Learning

There is compelling evidence that strong investments in the early learning years, prenatally through 3rd grade, have significant implications for ensuring all students graduate from school with the skills, knowledge and behaviors needed for any and all career and college pathways. Traditionally, educational approaches have separated the early learning years from public school K-12 systems. Today, PreK-3rd Grade Alignment, or "P-3", is recognized as an effective, comprehensive strategy for closing the achievement gap. P-3 brings community-based early childhood programs together with school districts around common goals for ensuring that all children establish strong foundations for future learning. Thanks to strong and thoughtful leadership at all levels, many P-3 alignment efforts have been launched throughout the region. It will continue to take inspired leaders and meaningful collaboration across community programs to transcend our currently fragmented systems and realize the potential to improve child outcomes early.





# how can you help?

- 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)
- Attend county early learning coalition meetings
- Encourage fathers
- Do you have other ideas?

## further resources

Share positive messages of healthy early development:  
[www.lovetalkplay.org](http://www.lovetalkplay.org)

Explore Washington State's Department of Early Learning: [www.del.wa.gov](http://www.del.wa.gov)

Make the prevention of child abuse & family violence a priority:  
[www.childabuseprevention.org](http://www.childabuseprevention.org)

Attend local showings of *The Raising of America*:  
[www.raisingofamerica.org](http://www.raisingofamerica.org)

Learn about Early Achievers scholarships through Child Care Aware :  
[wa.childcareaware.org/providers/scholarships](http://wa.childcareaware.org/providers/scholarships)

Utilize the Washington State Full-Day Kindergarten Guide (OSPI August 2015):  
[www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning/FullDayKindergartenResearch.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/EarlyLearning/FullDayKindergartenResearch.aspx)



## Regional Early Learning Leaders

Four Snohomish County early learning leaders have teamed up to participate in the University of Washington's 2015-16 P-3 Executive Leadership Institute. The team includes Bunny Walters of United Way Snohomish County, Graham Cook, Matt Wyant, and Mari Taylor of Lake Stevens School District (pictured above with Kristie Kauerz & Molly Branson Thayer from the UW College of Education). Doug Johnson, from Edmonds School District is also a participant.

The Institute was created to bring administrators, in both early childhood and elementary education, together to cultivate cross-systems leadership to improve outcomes for P-3 learners, increase equity, and eliminate achievement gaps. The program involves an action research project unique to each team. The Snohomish County team aims to cultivate awareness of the critical importance of strong home/school connections and increase family engagement.

Many local leaders also participated in 2014-15, the Institute's inaugural cohort: Josephine Escalante, Burlington Little School; Kim Walbeck, Opportunity Council; Kelly Marks, Monica Defelice & Shannon Koehnen, Everett Public Schools; Rebecca Richter, Skagit Islands Head Start, Lori Knudson, Mount Vernon School District; and Karen Schreiber & Chris Fulford, Edmonds Public Schools.

All participants of the Institute aspire to influence and improve statewide P-3 efforts and add to a growing body of promising practices nation-wide.



# Equitable Outcomes

The mission of Northwest Early Learning is to support access to comprehensive early learning and family support opportunities for all children and families. NWEL recognizes that in order to realize our mission for ALL children and families, we must address inequity in our institutions and communities.

The Department of Early Learning, its Early Learning Advisory Council and Thrive Washington are developing a racial equity framework to assure that our state and communities have the knowledge and tools to lead to equity. Among these tools are a set of Essential Equity Questions intended to generate inquiry into racially-based disparities, evaluate impacts and identify individual or collective actions for equity.

NWEL will plan to adopt this framework to help build an early learning system that ensures all children have an opportunity to reach their full potential, without experiencing discrimination or bias.

For more information about ELAC visit <http://www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/elac/>.

## Racial Equity Theory of Change



A vision of what we want to accomplish, with the steps to get there. <https://thrivewa.org/work/racialequity/#sthash.hYp3lyZ3.dpuf>



## Essential Equity Questions

Is it good for kids, families and providers of color?

Do some kids and families benefit more or less than others?

Do kids and families of color have access, and if not, why?

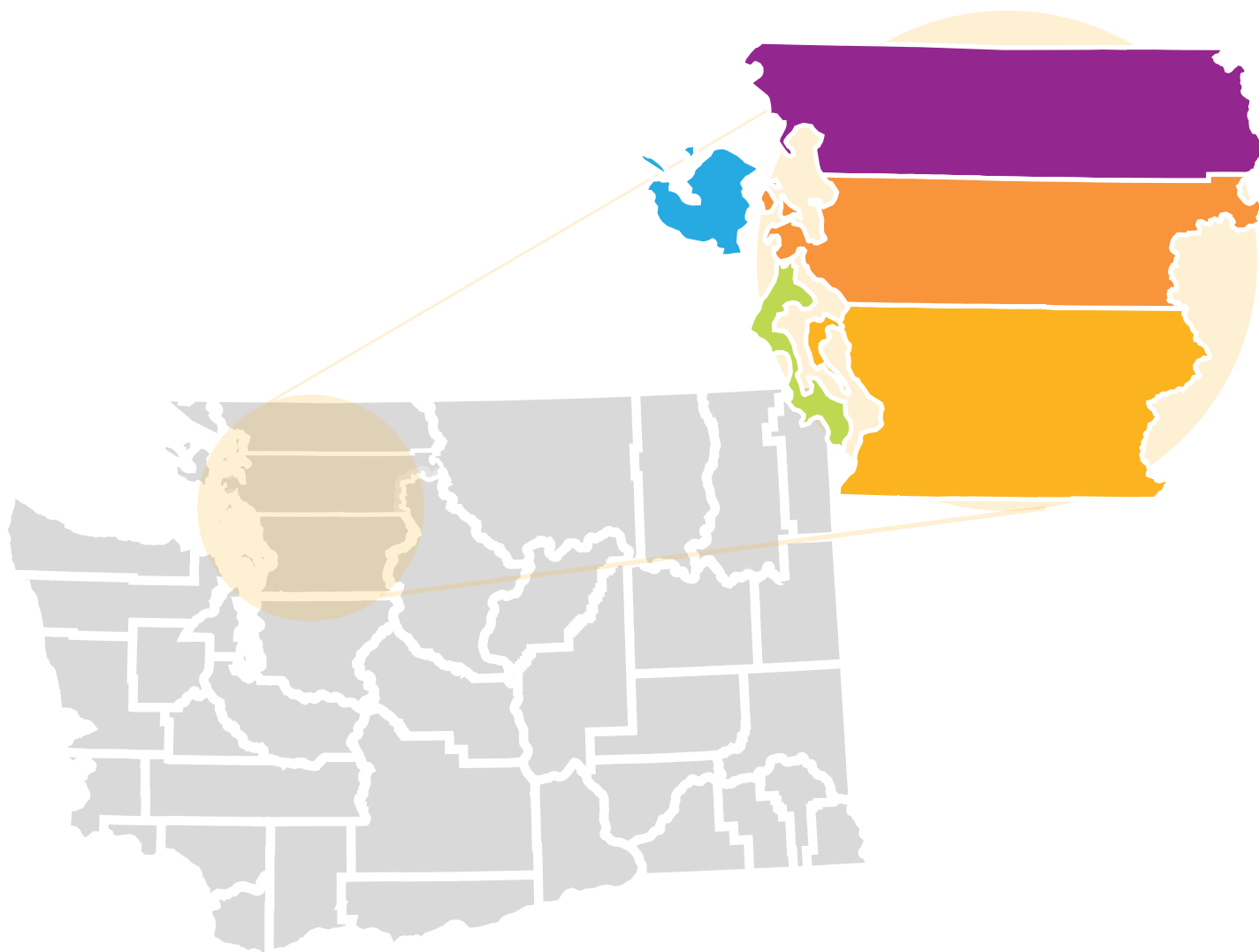
What data and information is missing?

Are there any unintended consequences?



# Northwest Early Learning

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**Partners for Young Children in Island County**

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**San Juan County Early Learning Consortium**

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**Whatcom Early Learning Alliance**

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**Children's Council of Skagit County**

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# Acknowledgements



**Northwest Educational  
Service District 189**

*Together We Can*



**THRIVE**  
WASHINGTON