



Children's Council of Skagit County

Strategic Plan



Introductory Statement

For over three decades, the Children’s Council has been bringing together representatives from organizations who serve families in Skagit County. Together, our collective goal is to create environments where every child thrives, and all families are welcome and supported.

This strategic plan outlines a roadmap that reflects our dedication to innovative solutions, collaboration, and advocacy for the well-being of the youngest members of our community and the adults who are raising them. By working upstream, we are proactively addressing root causes and systemic barriers, ensuring sustainable solutions that build better futures for families.

This plan is informed by the Population Health Trust’s First 1000 Days Call to Action and aligned with the Washington State Early Learning Coordination Plan and the Help Me Grow framework.

Join us on this transformative journey as we commit to make a lasting impact for generations to come.

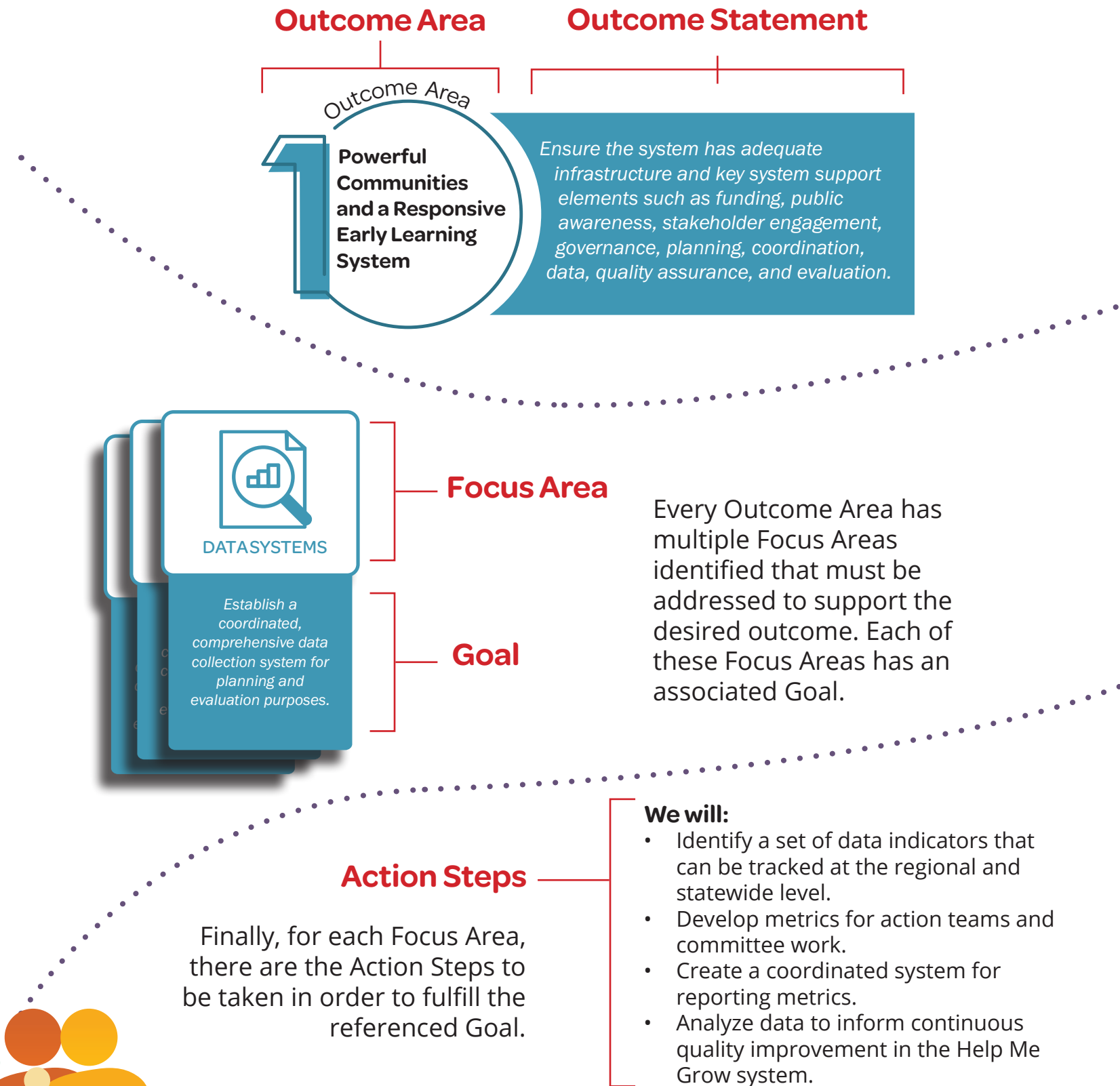
Collaboration

The Children’s Council of Skagit County is a member of our regional Northwest Early Learning Coalition, which is one of ten regional coalitions of the statewide Washington Coalition for Children (WCFC). The Children’s Council is also a member of the Community Partnership Board of Help Me Grow Washington, which is part of WithinReach.



How to Read This Report

There are five numbered Outcome Areas, each of which has an associated Outcome Statement summarizing its objective.



Outcome Area

1 Powerful Communities and a Responsive Early Learning System

Our local early learning system has adequate infrastructure. This includes elements such as funding, governance, stakeholder engagement, planning, coordination, data, quality assurance, and evaluation.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Enhance systems infrastructure to ensure responsiveness to families and providers in underserved communities.

- We will:**
- ensure the Children’s Council board includes a broad spectrum of sector representatives
 - bolster Help Me Grow Skagit initiatives
 - prioritize and embed equity throughout all our work
 - facilitate regular meetings and communications
 - foster collaborations with related coalitions and initiatives
 - stay proactive in adopting emerging opportunities



ADVOCACY

Develop policies and advocacy strategies that promote equitable outcomes and advance the well-being of children, families, and communities.

- We will:**
- cultivate relationships with local policy makers,
 - identify legislative champions who support early learning initiatives
 - create persuasive policy briefs,
 - mobilize various advocacy campaigns,
 - align policy priorities with regional and statewide stakeholders,
 - participate in Advocacy Days and engage families in advocacy efforts



FAMILY VOICE

Strengthen family voice and involvement in our overall work.

- We will:**
- partner with existing family advisory councils and committees
 - establish a family advisory structure
 - conduct listening sessions
 - address barriers to family engagement
 - employ targeted universalism strategies to support family leadership pathways



DATASYSTEMS

Establish a coordinated, comprehensive data collection system for planning and evaluation purposes.

- We will:**
- develop indicators and metrics for all our work
 - implement a coordinated reporting system
 - utilize data analysis to drive continuous improvement.



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Strong, Stable, Nurturing, Safe, and Supported Families

All families have the resources and supports they need to nurture their child and achieve overall family well-being.



ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Expand community-based family supports that provide culturally sensitive navigation assistance to help parents and families access needed services and supports.

We will:

- Maintain a Skagit Resource directory to connect families to resources,
- Develop a network of trained family resource navigators for families of young children
- Implement a newborn outreach program
- address barriers to accessing resources,
- increase community awareness of resources through outreach activities
- enhance connections between home visiting programs
- provide mobile/pop-up resource offerings



PARENTAL RESILIENCE

Provide supports to all families to ensure they are healthy, resilient, and can meet the basic needs for their families.

We will:

- sustain and expand the Help Me Grow Family Resource Center and navigation call line
- assess existing supports for parents
- adjust programming based on survey results
- coordinate and expand multilingual/multi-cultural parenting support
- support perinatal mood disorder screenings and groups



ACCESS TO SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

All families thrive with access to community social connections that honor their unique shared experiences, culture and language.

We will:

- expand play & learn groups and parent/caregiver classes
- collaborate with partners to provide inclusive settings for children with special needs
- create fatherhood supports

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Positive Early Learning Experiences

Families have access to safe, engaging and positive early learning experiences that promote school readiness and lifetime success.



SEAMLESS TRANSITIONS

Foster seamless transitions from prenatal through 3rd grade, with a focus on social-emotional development and strong relationships.

We will:

- enhance collaboration and communication among childcare, preschool, school district early learning staff, and elementary education professionals
- promote the use of Transition Reports
- Promote opportunities for shared training among early childhood professionals and elementary school teachers



AFFORDABILITY & AVAILABILITY

Enhance affordability and availability of early learning services.

We will:

- Advocate for affordable early learning programs
- Support employer-based early learning options



CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE

Ensure cultural responsiveness in early learning programs and services, incorporating home languages and practices.

We will:

- Provide resources and support for culturally responsive system navigators and group/class facilitators
- Offer training and resources to professionals and community partners
- Promote, partner with, and attend events led by diverse communities



CHILD DEVELOPMENT SUPPORTS

Increase access to child development supports outside of childcare.

We will:

- Highlight community organizations that provide resources supporting children's development
- Promote access to activities that strengthen families and promote child development
- Create developmental newsletters to share with families



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A Strong and Supported Early Learning Workforce

The early childhood workforce has access to training, supports, and compensation to sustain high-quality practices and services.



PUBLIC AWARENESS

Build public awareness that results in advocacy for budget and policy actions that address the need to increase compensation and enhance the stability of the early learning workforce.

We will:

- elevate the public image of early childhood professionals
- advocate for equitable compensation and benefits for early learning professionals.
- create a repository of advocacy resources



SUPPORTED WORKFORCE

Improve retention of a strong workforce, including professional development opportunities to learn from one another based on community needs.

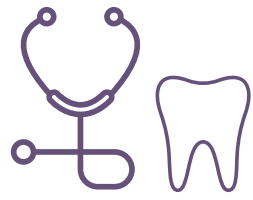
We will:

- Establish referral pathways and feedback loops between the early learning workforce and Help Me Grow.
- Share opportunities for low or no cost training for early learning professionals including topics on mental health support for staff, trauma-informed care, and other relevant issues

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Healthy Children and Families

Families have access to coordinated comprehensive and integrated health care, developmental screening and key social, behavioral and emotional supports.



COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORTS

Improve access to comprehensive health supports and ensure continuity of services for children and families.

We will:

- Promote efforts to integrate medical, dental, mental health, and substance use services
- establish partnerships for mobile health support
- Advocate for funding for mental health and behavioral supports
- raise awareness of barriers facing immigrants and develop responsive strategies
- advocate for health equity policies, address transportation and language barriers
- enhance accessibility through multilingual videos and voice-to-text technology



PARTNERSHIPS

Build strong connections between healthcare services and social/community support services to provide whole-family care.

We will:

- Promote universal developmental and health-related screenings to identify and address developmental concerns early on.
- Enhance partnerships between healthcare providers and Help Me Grow Coordinated Access Points.





Children’s Council Leadership

The Children’s Council Board is responsible for setting priorities for the monthly Council meetings, as well as leading strategic planning efforts. All members of the board are Council leaders and are voting members in good standing. As leaders, board members are responsible for setting a positive, proactive, inclusive, equitable, and productive tone for the Council and its role in the community.

Our Board includes the following positions:

Chair, Chair-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, Past Chair, Membership, Northwest Early Learning Coalition Representatives, Health Care Provider Lead, Child Care Lead, Data & Analysis Lead, Family & Community Outreach Lead, Coordinated Access Point Lead, Equity Lead, Family Resource Navigator staff, and the Council Coordinator.

Membership includes representatives from the following organizations:

Boys & Girls Club of Skagit County
Brigid Collins
Burlington Library
Burlington Little School
Child Care Aware
Children of the Valley
Children’s Museum of Skagit County
Citipoint Church
Central Skagit Library
Community Action of Skagit County
Department of Social and Health Services
Division of Children, Youth, and Families
Mount Vernon Library
Mount Vernon School District
Museum of Northwest Art
Olive Crest
Opportunity Council
Parent to Parent

Perinatal Support of Washington
SeaMar
Sedro-Woolley School District
Skagit Community Foundation
Skagit County Public Health
Skagit/Islands Head Start & ECEAP
Skagit Kid Insider
Skagit OT Studio
Skagit Pediatrics
Skagit Preschool and Resource Center
Skagit Valley College
Skagit Regional Health
Skagit Valley Family YMCA
Taking Steps Together
United General District 304 WIC
Valley Kids Therapy
WithinReach
YouthNet

Values

The Core Value of the Children’s Council of Skagit County are beliefs and behaviors we collectively use to guide our work to ensure that all children are supported and able to reach their full potential.

Respect and Integrity – Welcoming and opening to all conversations, questions, and input about our shared vision and common goals.

High Standards of Quality - Holding ourselves accountable for making informed decisions and producing quality work.

Connectivity and Partnerships – Working together to align and support collective outcomes while actively inviting and elevating community voice.

Continuous Growth – Responding and adapting to the changing needs of our community as identified by current research and evaluation.

Curiosity, Creativity, and Playfulness – Creating spaces that inspire, encourage, and foster an environment of possibility.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion - Striving to reflect and engage all of our community to create the conditions for equitable access and supports.

The Children’s Council believes diversity strengthens a community and acknowledges inequities exist within our community based on race, ethnicity, culture, language, gender, gender expression, sexual orientation, income, ability, geography, and more. We are committed to regularly examining our actions, systems, policies, and practices in the continued effort to increase our understanding of and capacity to ensure equitable access and support for families’ unique needs and structures. As we examine our own privilege, acknowledge our biases, and our power dynamic, we continuously learn, actively engage with community voice, and adapt our practices to best serve our community. We have an ongoing commitment to each other and ourselves to uphold the values we collectively outlined.

Land Acknowledgement

Today, we serve the communities of northern and eastern Skagit County within hospital district 304 boundaries. We recognize these lands and waterways have been host to and cared for by native Coast Salish people since long before we became a nation. The Lummi, Nooksack, Samish, Sauk-Suiattle, Stillaguamish, Swinomish, Upper Skagit, and Tulalip tribes carry on this legacy in our region today and we recognize their sovereignty. Relationships with tribes have been harmed through broken treaties and broken trust over the decades. As an organization dedicated to building healthier communities, we know this includes the lands we occupy and the relationships we cultivate. With gratitude, we honor the stewardship of Coast Salish peoples and the environment that sustains us.



Children's Council of Skagit County

Outcome Area

1 Powerful Communities and a Responsive Early Learning System

The Children's Council of Skagit County brings representatives from child/parent serving organizations and community members together to empower and enrich the lives of young children and their families in Skagit County. We achieve this by actively networking and sharing resources to ensure families have the tools necessary to have the best possible start.

Outcome Area

2 Strong, Stable, Nurturing, Safe, and Supported Families

The Council works collaboratively with other community partners to bring needed services to Skagit County and to raise awareness of the value of early supports for families.

Outcome Area

3 Positive Early Learning Experiences

Outcome Area

4 A Strong and Supported Early Learning Workforce

For more information about our strategic plan, visit the children's council website as we will add more information about each area and our progress towards our five outcome areas.

Outcome Area

5 Healthy Children and Families

The Children's Council of Skagit County is supported by:



Building Healthier Communities