



# **Annual Report Year 2**

July 2025 - June 2026



## **Connecting community partners, strengthening relationships, and removing barriers so all families belong, are nurtured, and can thrive.**

For more than 30 years, the Children's Council of Skagit County has been bringing people and organizations together to strengthen the lives of young children and families. Our current strategic plan builds on our history of collaboration, giving our work a shared framework through 5 outcome areas aligned with Washington State's Early Learning Coordination Plan. As we reflect on the second year of this plan, we are celebrating not the work of one organization, but what is possible when our community comes together around a shared vision for children and families.

This year, representatives from 42 organizations participated in the Children's Council. Our partners are doing incredible work every day to support children and families, and we know that none of us can do this alone. By bringing organizations and community stakeholders together around shared goals, we can accomplish more together than any one organization could accomplish on its own. ***This is collective impact at work!***

The Children's Council is supported by United General District 304, which serves as our fiscal sponsor and provides the staff and infrastructure that make this work possible. United General employs our Council coordinator and provides supports through grant writing, website and graphic design, and other organizational resources. This partnership provides a strong foundation that allows the Council to focus on the five outcome areas outlined in our strategic plan.

We are grateful to the many organizations, professionals, volunteers, families, and community members who contribute their time, expertise, and passion to this work. The progress highlighted in this report belongs to all of us!

### **The Children's Council of Skagit County Board**



# 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.*

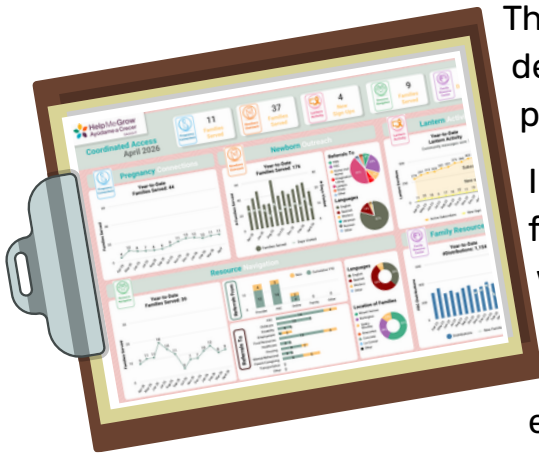
Infrastructure

Advocacy

Data Systems

Family Voice

## Building a Stronger Foundation



The Board reviews monthly progress with the newly developed **Data Dashboard** that helps us track the progress towards our goals.

In an effort to incorporate **family voice** and capture feedback about the Help Me Grow system, families who have engaged with Pregnancy Connections, the Family Resource Center, Resource Navigation, and Newborn Outreach have received a survey about their experience and how their needs were met.



## Children's Council Meetings

Organizations represented  
**41**

Number of Meetings  
**9** general meetings  
**10** board meetings

Meet & Greet Participants  
**39**

## Help Me Grow Skagit Fund



Pictured on the cover!

The creation of the **Help Me Grow Skagit Fund** through our friends at the Skagit Community Foundation provides a sustainable way for our community to invest in local early childhood efforts. Learn more about the fund and how to donate at [www.skagitcf.org/helpmegrow](http://www.skagitcf.org/helpmegrow)

*When families help shape our work, the entire system becomes stronger.*

# Outcome Area 2 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 Social Connections

Parent Resilience

Access to Resources

## Connecting Families to Support

Families thrive when it's easy to find support. This year we expanded the Help Me Grow Resource Finder with a comprehensive **Skagit County directory**, launched a bilingual **Play & Grow Toddler Group**, and secured funding for **Skagit Dads Connect**, a new fatherhood initiative.



Together, along with our **resource navigators**, **Pregnancy Connections**, and the **HMG Family Resource Center**, these efforts make services more accessible, welcoming, and responsive to the needs of local families.

*Every family deserves to know where to turn when they need support.*

SKAGIT  
**DADS**  
CONNECT

### Pregnancy Connections



Support calls with pregnant people

**109**

### Resource Navigation



Families served

**121**

### Family Resource Center



Distributions of basic needs items

**1743**



United General District 304's Skagit Dads Team:  
Genaro Sanchez, Jarrod Blecha, John Solano

# Outcome Area 3 Positive Early Learning Experiences

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

Affordability & Availability

Seamless Transitions

Child Development Supports

Culturally Responsive

## Supporting Early Learning Everywhere

Learning happens everywhere children grow. This year, the Children's Museum launched **Help Me Grow on the Go, Andi the Ambulance**. With support from a Skagit Leadership team, Andi was branded and stocked with materials, just in time for Healthy Kids Day!



### Lantern



**462**

Total Skagit families who are receiving Lantern messages

**147**

New Skagit families who signed up for Lantern

## Lantern

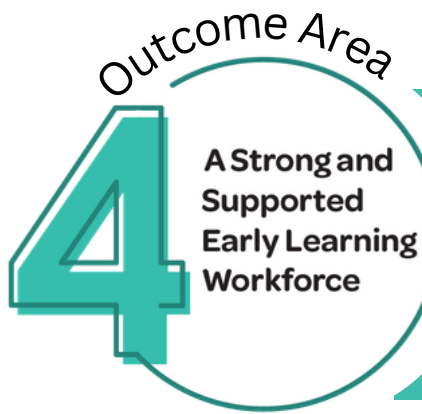


Lantern is a text messaging platform that helps parents support their **child's development** through trusted information and early learning opportunities, as well as information about local opportunities.

### Partner highlight:

Mount Vernon School District and Child Care Aware NW teamed up to host the "Get the Scoop" event that brought together PreK and Kindergarten teachers to help **promote smooth transitions** for upcoming Kindergarteners.

*Children learn best when opportunities to play and grow are woven into everyday life.*



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

Public Awareness

Supported Workforce

## Supporting Those Who Support Children

This year, we welcomed a new Policy & Advocacy Lead to the Board. Philip Taylor is the Northwest Regional Advocacy Lead at the Quality Child Care Division of the Opportunity Council.

Philip was a lead staff as Childcare Aware held their annual **advocacy day in Olympia**, which included a rally on the Capitol steps and scheduled meetings between advocates and their legislators.

Additionally, **two parents and one provider from Skagit** testified about the importance of funding early learning during statewide budget hearings.



### Advocacy Wins

A proposed cap on child care subsidies was stopped. Lawmakers directly credited advocates from the northwest. Community voices helped prevent more harmful cuts!



### Resource Folders

35

Folders with resource information for providers to share with parents were distributed.

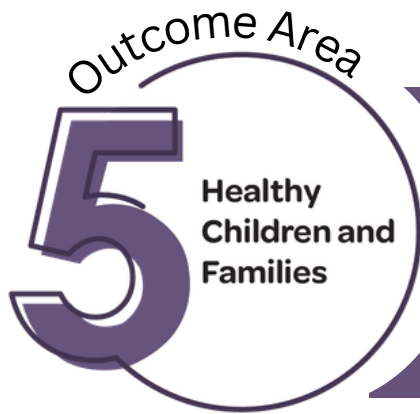
After hearing from local childcare providers about their need for resources to support families around immigration concerns, the Child Care Action Team **developed and distributed resource folders** with information about rights and available supports.

*Investing in the early childhood workforce is investing in our children's future.*

Help Me Grow Skagit presented to YMCA childcare staff to build awareness of community resources and referral pathways, **enabling staff to connect families with Help Me Grow Navigators** and the Family Resource Center when needed. This ensured families get connect to support and childcare providers don't have to keep up with every available service.



*ChildCare Aware NW team, providers, and parent advocates on the Capitol steps*



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

Comprehensive Supports

Partnerships

## Partnering for Healthy Beginnings

Healthcare partners continue to be the most trusted source of information for families about matters concerning public health. This year, we hosted Continuing Medical Education events for our primary care physicians, focused on child safety.



### Continuing Medical Education Events

- 40** people attended at least one virtual education event
- 88** people received education materials from at least one virtual education event



### Newborn Outreach

- 435** Families visited
- 196** Referrals made

**Newborn Outreach** through Skagit Valley Hospital and Island Hospital continues to **connect families to trusted support** as they bring their new babies home.



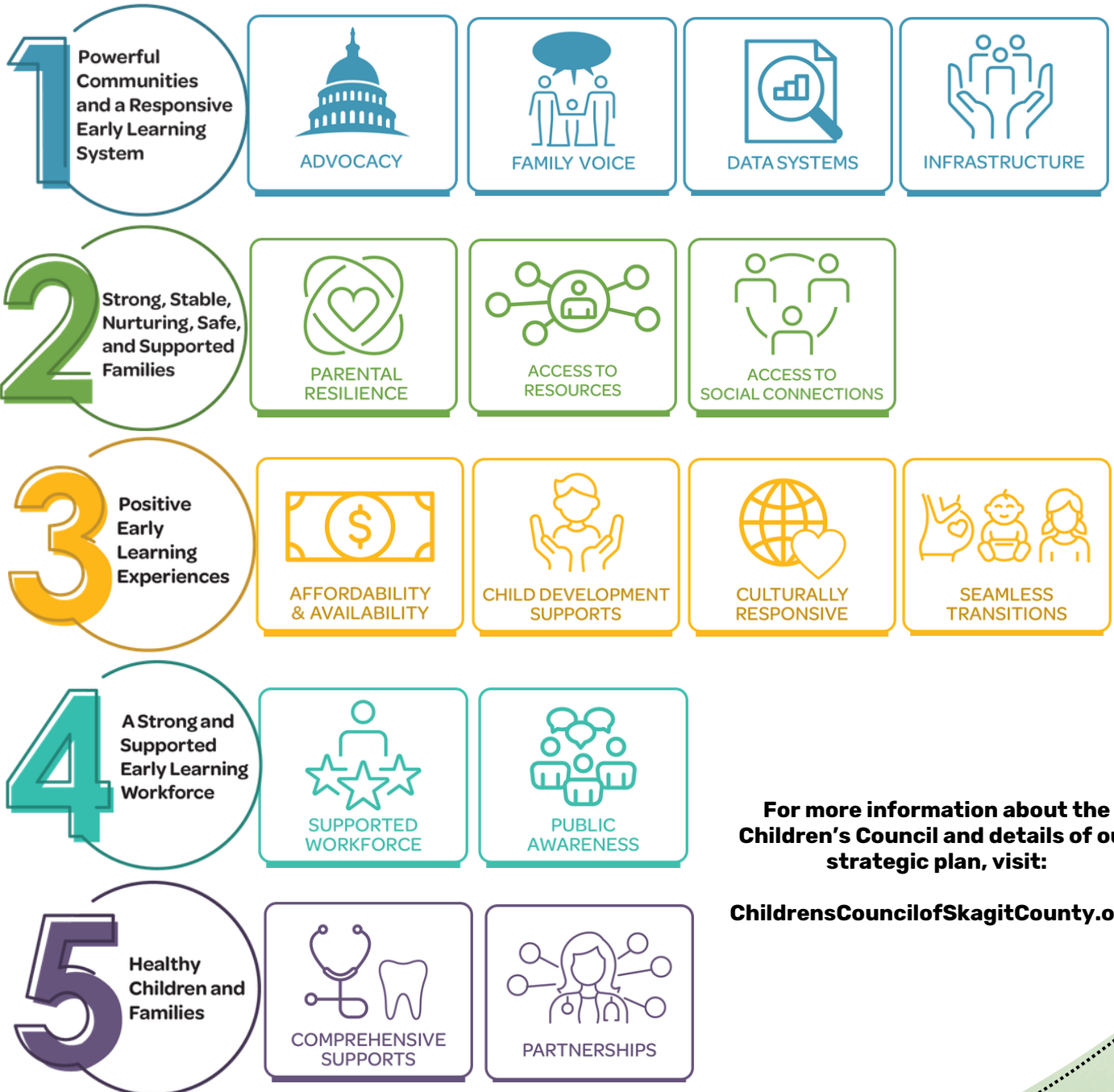
Liz Cooksey, United General District 304,  
with Kris Miller, Skagit Valley Hospital



The Washington State Medical Association invited Help Me Grow to present at the Leadership Conference on what to do when there is a positive social needs screening. Help Me Grow WA's Jackie Litza was joined by Dr. Francie Chalmers and Lyndie Simmonds to share about the **importance of resource and referral partnerships.**

*Every healthcare visit is an opportunity to strengthen a child's future*

# Strategic Plan Outcome Areas



**For more information about the Children's Council and details of our strategic plan, visit:**

**[ChildrensCouncilofSkagitCounty.org](http://ChildrensCouncilofSkagitCounty.org)**