



Legislative Agenda 2026

We are looking forward to working with the Legislature and partners to preserve critical infrastructure for children, youth, and families.

Our priorities include:

- **Protect funding for children, youth, and family programs:** Washington is facing a tough budget year with a large revenue shortfall. At the same time, families are dealing with higher costs of living and fewer federal supports. This is not the time to cut state programs that help children, youth, and families thrive. We urge lawmakers to protect existing funding, especially for the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and other programs that serve families with the greatest needs.
- **Make child care easier to access through simple policy fixes:** Some improvements to child care don't require major spending. Lawmakers can make a big difference by:
 - Codifying the cost of quality care rate model, co-created by DCYF and the Early Educator Design Team, specifying the model will include living wages, retirement contributions, and ongoing professional development resources.
 - Speeding up licensing and inspection processes to reduce delays for new and expanding providers.
 - Simplifying administrative requirements so programs can focus more on serving families.
 - Protecting immigrant children and their families in early learning facilities.
- **Partner with coalitions to meet broader needs of children and youth:** We will work with partner coalitions to advocate for key issues that affect children and families, including youth homelessness, basic needs support, and services for individuals with developmental disabilities. Together, we can advance solutions that strengthen families and communities across Washington.
- **Support fair and sustainable revenue solutions:** Washington's current tax system places a heavier burden on working families and small businesses than on the wealthiest residents. We support progressive revenue reforms that make the tax system fairer while ensuring stable funding for programs that help children, youth, and families succeed.