

"Washington's future depends on the health of our children"

Governor Jay Inslee

2015 Healthiest Next Generation Initiative

Every child deserves to grow up healthy and to have a promising future. Unfortunately, some experts believe that, for the first time in our nation's history, a generation of children may have shorter lives than their parents.



Recognizing that Washington's future depends on our children's health, Governor Jay Inslee launched the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative in September 2014 to join with families, community leaders and businesses across the state to make our next generation the healthiest one ever.

The Governor's Healthiest Next Generation Initiative offers the opportunity for community organizations, businesses, state and local agencies and other partners to collaborate under a common goal: help our children to eat well, maintain a healthy weight and enjoy active lives by promoting healthful choices in early learning settings, schools and communities.

Initiative focus areas

Strategies to create early learning settings, schools and communities that promote healthful choices are centered on these areas:

- » Physical activity: Helping children be active at least 60 minutes a day.
- » Healthful eating: Making sure children are well-fed and fed well, including having water to drink.
- » Breastfeeding: Supporting breastfeeding-friendly places.

Accomplishments

Funding made available in July 2014 supported temporary coordinator positions at the departments of Health and Early Learning and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Together, these agencies form a cross-agency team working to achieve the following by June 2015:

Completed or in progress

- » Convene community, business and state agency leaders to create the healthiest next generation ever.
- » Replicate programs that work and prioritize recommendations for statewide actions that help children be active and eat well in early learning settings, schools and communities.
- » Provide toolkits with strategies to ensure children are active, eating healthfully and drinking clean water in early learning settings and schools.
- » Promote healthful eating and active living goals in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program performance standards.
- » Revise statewide guidelines for health and fitness education to help children be more active at school.

Providing strategic direction for the initiative is a [Governor's council](#) composed of community, business and health and fitness leaders; legislators; and representatives from state agencies and local government. At the council's first meeting in September 2014, Governor Inslee invited participants to explore priorities for promoting healthy weight in children.

Proposed 2015–17 budget investments

Based on these priorities and recommendations from the Outdoor Recreation Task Force, the Governor proposed the following investments under the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative for the 2015–17 biennium:

- » Grants for elementary schools with 70 percent or more children eligible for free and reduced-price meals to operate Breakfast-after-the-Bell programs. (\$5.0 million)
- » Grants for schools to improve the health and safety needs of children, such as by installing playground equipment or water bottle-filling stations, upgrading school nutrition equipment or planting school gardens. Focus will be on schools with high need. (\$5.0 million)
- » Outdoor learning opportunities for young people. (\$1.0 million)
- » Early learning training module on health, nutrition and age-appropriate physical activity for child care providers. (\$30,000)
- » Grants for nonprofits and local governments to support indoor and outdoor youth athletic facilities projects. (\$6.4 million)
- » Additional funding for the Safe Routes to School Program to get more children biking and walking to school, reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. (\$6.6 million)
- » Funding for municipalities to make their streets safe for walking, driving, bicycling and public transportation. (\$9.7 million)
- » Grants to improve conditions for cyclists and pedestrians in cities and towns across the state. (\$12.5 million)
- » Investments in state parks to help ensure families and children can enjoy the outdoors. (\$18.4 million)
- » Staffing for the departments of Health and Early Learning and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to continue the foundational work of the initiative originally funded by the Legislature. (\$1.0 million)

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Replicating successes and piloting new ideas

The Healthiest Next Generation Initiative is intended to bring to replicate the efforts underway in communities across Washington like the following:

- » Highline Public Schools set up **alternative breakfast programs** (Breakfast after the Bell and Grab and Go) in six elementary schools. These programs reduce potential stigma and ensure students taking the bus do not miss breakfast.
- » The Community School of West Seattle maintains two **open places** for children to play. This preschool has an outdoor play “rain or shine” policy and stocks extra boots and jackets for kids who need them. Fresh fruits and vegetables are on the menu every day and all classrooms have water pitchers with a self-serve tap.
- » The city of White Salmon adopted a complete streets ordinance and leveraged this to support a plan for **safer walking and biking** to Whitson Elementary School.
- » The Makah Tribe created an **all-season walking area** and conducted a community-wide survey to establish priorities for more improvements that promote wellness on the reservation.
- » **Sequential start times** in Skagit County’s Mount Vernon School District. The bus fleet has dropped from 27 to 12 vehicles, reducing traffic congestion and emissions around schools. Along with a new 1-mile **walk zone** around each school, this change allows children to walk to school safely and saves the district almost \$250,000.
- » The **transformation of a convenience store** in the impoverished West Central neighborhood of Spokane County. Parkside Grocery now sells locally grown produce, and is the only WIC-authorized corner store in the county.

- » **Improvements to school meals** in King County’s Auburn School District by sending more than 500 cafeteria staff to certified culinary training through the Washington School Nutrition Association.
- » YMCA’s partnering with schools to install **water bottle filling stations**.



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