CHILDREN’S SERVICES IN WASHINGTON

Blue Ribbon Commission May 10, 2016

PRESENTED BY BENJAMIN DE HAAN
WHO ARE WE SERVING AND WHO SHOULD WE AIM TO SERVE

~100,000 children in Washington are served by the child welfare system

~200,000 children are receiving services from DSHS and are at high risk for child maltreatment (e.g., developmental disabilities, mental health services, substance abuse in the home, TANF)

~285,000 children in Washington meet the federal definition of poverty, a strong proxy for children at risk of maltreatment

1 Washington DSHS data
2 US Census
Child welfare involvement is closely related to family poverty, parental mental health concerns, child behavioral health, domestic violence and substance abuse.

In 2009 a survey conducted with parents who were involved in the child welfare system in Washington, found that:

- 47% had an annual income less than $10,000
- 81% of were receiving assistance from public programs, families or friends.
- Families reported a high unmet need for food, clothing, transportation, and housing
- 56% of parents met the criteria for one or more mental health disorders and 35% had experienced domestic violence
Opportunities

- Opportunity to create an enhanced prevention framework for vulnerable children and families
- Greater opportunity to link to child-focused outcomes
- Brings an elevated focus on children’s issues with a direct voice to the Governor
- A smaller agency brings increased opportunity for flexibility, innovation and partnerships