

Improving the Well-Being of Washington State's Children, Youth and Families

*The report of the Washington State Blue Ribbon
Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and
Families*

November 8, 2016

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Executive Summary

The Blue Ribbon Commission

Governor Jay Inslee established the Washington State Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families and charged it with recommending a structure for a new state department focused solely on improving services and outcomes for children, youth and families.

The way government is organized signals what its priorities are. A decade ago, our state created the nation's first cabinet-level Department of Early Learning to intentionally focus our collective attention on our youngest children and their families. Since then, Washington has become a national leader in our efforts to close the opportunity gap and increase kindergarten readiness with the highest quality programs. We now need to build on these successes and go a step further, integrating and aligning all of our best practices to serve children, youth and families.

Brain science tells us that laying a strong foundation, early in life, critically impacts healthy development. The science also tells us that addressing trauma, especially at critical transition points in the lives of youth, helps ensure successful transition into adulthood. To truly give all children the great start in school and life they deserve, our state needs a comprehensive agency exclusively dedicated to the social, emotional and physical well-being of children, youth and families — an agency that prioritizes early learning, prevention and early intervention at critical points along the age continuum from birth through adolescence.

Several other states, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, have successfully implemented departments dedicated to serving children and families. These departments have improved the visibility of children's issues, increased authority and accountability, enabled policy changes and system improvements, and created a

stronger focus on serving children, youth and families in both the executive and legislative branches.

Even the most resilient children and youth, especially those exposed to challenging circumstances early in life, often have adverse experiences and trauma that impair their ability to succeed in school and beyond. Advancements in research and science have helped us better understand indicators of risk, how they impact healthy development, and the critical importance of stable, nurturing relationships to the healthy development of children, particularly in their early years. We know that we can either pay now or pay a lot more later if we don't address these early traumas.

Our state has an opportunity not only to create a new agency, but also to design new approaches for systems that were created decades ago — systems that can more effectively improve the well-being of Washington's children, youth and families.

Commission Findings and Conclusions

After reviewing research, hearing from stakeholders and studying data regarding how children, youth and families are faring in our state today, the commission concluded:

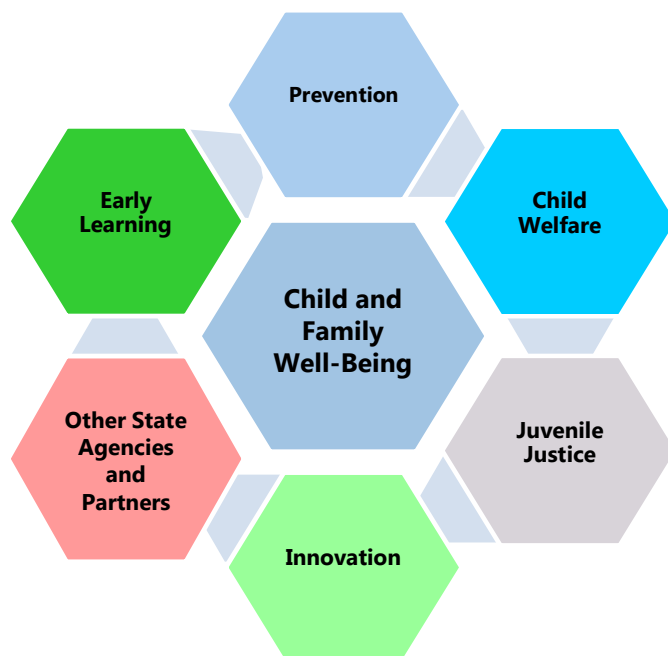
- ❖ ***State services are not currently organized in a way that achieves the best outcomes for children, youth and families.*** There should be a single department whose mission is centered on child safety, early learning, and the social, emotional and physical well-being of children, youth and families — supporting and strengthening families before crises occur.
- ❖ ***We should build on current strengths and successes of the Department of Early Learning (DEL).*** Our state's youngest children and families have already benefitted considerably from this state-level focus. We must expand this work and continue to strive for and prioritize early learning, prevention and early intervention.
- ❖ ***Parents and families who are facing challenges must be offered needed and appropriate services earlier to improve the healthy development of children and youth, protect them from harm and disrupt multigenerational trauma.***

- ❖ ***We should use this opportunity to improve the effectiveness of how and when services are delivered, with a much greater focus on prevention and recognition of the importance of caregiving to healthy brain development.***
 What we know about the importance of stable, nurturing relationships for children — as well as the impact of trauma — must be incorporated into the practice model for early learning, child welfare and juvenile justice, including the courts.
- ❖ ***We should strengthen the collective impact of all services provided by the state to children, youth and families, no matter which agency is the lead for providing them, by making sure they are science-based, have aligned outcomes, share real-time data and create a more cohesive continuum of care.*** This will help the state make maximum use of its resources by allocating funding and services in ways that are consistently aligned with the best practices for serving children, youth and families. For those involved with any state system, there should be more seamless connections whenever possible to other needed services, for instance the use of Medicaid-funded services, that will help to minimize additional system involvement or harm.
- ❖ ***We should prioritize those children and youth most at risk of neglect, physical harm, sexual abuse and other adverse factors most often linked to low rates of kindergarten readiness, dropping out of school, substance abuse, incarceration, homelessness and other negative outcomes later in life.***
- ❖ ***We should integrate the Children’s Administration (CA) with DEL to better ensure that children get access to help and services early in life, when it can give them the foundation they need and put them on a path to healthy development and success in school.***
- ❖ ***We should also integrate Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) and the Office of Juvenile Justice into the new department to better address all youth who are at one time or another in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.***

- ❖ ***We should ensure focused attention on adolescents, with this new agency having primary responsibility for helping the state achieve better outcomes for youth in this age cohort.*** Adolescent brain development is a critical period and an opportunity to change a youth’s trajectory into adulthood. Older children and youth also are an important focus for any holistic approach to supporting the well-being of children.
- ❖ ***We should ensure that the programs and services of this department are tightly aligned or integrated with essential services such as economic supports that address poverty, and access to behavioral health services.***
- ❖ ***We should strengthen the linkages to K–12 schools to ensure that children and youth who are struggling or disengaged from school are identified early and that resources in the new department, schools and communities are mobilized and coordinated to support students’ continued progress toward graduation.*** Access to needed behavioral health services must be streamlined and integrated to ensure timely provision of help to keep children and youth on a trajectory toward academic success.

A New Department, Focused Squarely on Children, Youth and Families

Understanding of brain science reflects the importance of stronger connections and a continuum-of-care approach among early learning and the other early childhood services provided by DEL, the child welfare system, and juvenile justice and other services for adolescents. The new agency, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), would use the infrastructure of DEL. It would encompass the DSHS programs currently operated by CA, JR and the Office of Juvenile Justice.



A Culture of Data, Innovation and Addressing Systemic Problems

The new agency would help create a data-focused environment in which all partners are clear that the state can only achieve this vision if there is shared, real-time data that is accessible to everyone interacting with the family, child or youth at the time of the interaction, to know what they need and which services would be effective.

While others in the agency are focused on the day-to-day task of serving children and families, the new agency would have an Office of Innovation and Alignment to lead this effort and other ongoing system reform work. This office would focus on continuous improvement, including advancements in research; alignment and measuring of outcomes, including the use of evidence-based and research-based practices; data sharing across state agencies and key statewide private partners; development of a children, youth and families budget in partnership with the Office of Financial Management; quality assurance; and evaluation. It also would lead partnerships with the community, research and teaching institutions, the philanthropic community and nonprofit partners. Each year, in collaboration with key stakeholders, the Office of Innovation and Alignment would produce an annual work plan for priorities for ongoing policy, practice and system reform, as well as tracking and reporting out on the performance of its reforms accomplished to date.

Additional considerations include the following:

- ❖ ***Disparities impacting children, youth and families across systems must be addressed as a fundamental underpinning of the new model.*** Providing equitable access to services and supports must be a priority.
- ❖ ***A robust data and technology capability is fundamental to improving outcomes for children, youth and families.*** The new department's technology needs to align with Washington's longstanding commitment to the use of data to understand who is being served, for what purpose and to what end.
- ❖ ***Implementation of this new model, focusing on addressing risk factors and intervening early, can reduce costs.*** These cost savings should be reinvested to address service gaps across the state with culturally appropriate evidence-based and research-based interventions.

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Overview

Background

On February 18, 2016, Governor Jay Inslee issued Executive Order 16-03 establishing the Washington State Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families. (See Appendix A for the text of the executive order.) The executive order directed the commission to recommend an organizational structure for a new department focused solely on children, youth and families, with the goal of improving services and outcomes, promoting greater accountability and heightening the visibility of children's issues.

For many years, the state's primary agency for serving children, youth and families has been the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). DSHS has a staff of approximately 17,500, oversees a budget of \$14 billion per biennium and is responsible for managing everything from child welfare to state psychiatric hospitals and long-term care. The size and complexity of the agency, and urgent concerns to reform mental health, often compete with the challenges facing child welfare, which demand priority attention as well.

The state also serves children and families through a number of other agencies across state government — including the Health Care Authority (HCA), Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Department of Commerce (COM) and Department of Health (DOH) — as well as by funding a wide range of community-based programs.

The way government is organized signals what its priorities are. A decade ago, our state created the nation's first cabinet-level Department of Early Learning to intentionally focus our collective attention on our youngest children and their families. Since then, Washington has become a national leader in our efforts to close the opportunity gap and increase kindergarten readiness with the highest quality programs. We now need to build on these successes and go a step further, integrating and aligning all of our best practices to serve children and families.

Brain science tells us that laying a strong foundation, early in life, critically impacts healthy development. The science also tells us that addressing trauma, especially at

critical transition points in the lives of youth, helps ensure successful transition into adulthood. To truly give all children the great start in school and life they deserve, our state needs a comprehensive agency exclusively dedicated to the social, emotional and physical well-being of children, youth and families — an agency that prioritizes prevention and early intervention.

Several other jurisdictions, including Indiana, New Jersey, Tennessee, Georgia, Wisconsin and New York City, under both Democratic and Republican administrations, have successfully implemented separate departments of children and families. In these reforms, separate departments have improved the visibility of children’s issues, increased authority and accountability, enabled policy changes and system improvements, and created a stronger focus on serving children, youth and families in both the executive and legislative branches.

Although the idea of a separate department serving children, youth and families has been studied extensively in Washington, and introduced multiple times by the Legislature, legislation did not pass when last introduced in 2005 and 2006. During the 2016 legislative session, both the Governor and legislators expressed strong interest in the creation of a new department.

Making large, structural changes to state government requires careful planning and consideration of the potential impact on costs, staff, ongoing work, performance indicators and timeframes. Sufficient authority, capacity, leadership and financial resources are all critical elements of an agency’s ability to achieve its stated goals.

Recognizing those considerations, Governor Inslee tasked the 16-member commission with creating a blueprint for the new agency by November 2016 so that recommendations could be considered in the 2017–19 biennial budget process. He asked legislative leaders to appoint a Democratic and Republican member from each chamber of the Legislature and appointed the other 12 commissioners, including officials from state agencies, a judge and a juvenile court administrator, representatives of tribal governments, a representative from the Washington Federation of State Employees, and child welfare and system reform subject matter experts. (See Appendix B for a list of commissioners.) Representative Ruth Kagi and Judge Anne Levinson (ret.) were appointed as the commission’s co-chairs.¹

Guiding Principles

The commission began its work by developing guiding principles regarding the essential attributes for this new department and how the state should serve children, youth and families across its agencies. Thousands of families across the state struggle with poverty, mental health and substance abuse issues, child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, homelessness, racial or cultural inequities and other challenges. Even the most resilient children exposed to these circumstances often experience severe trauma and hardship, impairing their ability to succeed in school and beyond. The commission's work offered a unique opportunity to review the programs and delivery systems in light of current data and research that will emphasize prevention and improve child and youth well-being, especially for those most vulnerable.

1. Focus on prevention.

Services will be targeted to help support and strengthen families before crises occur and children and youth become system-involved. For those already involved with any state system, every contact is leveraged as an opportunity for prevention strategies with connection to other needed services that will help to minimize further or additional system involvement or harm.

2. Focus on promoting child, youth and family well-being.

Services will be centered on the "whole person" social determinants of health and well-being approach, including the social, emotional, cognitive, physical health and socio-economic aspects of children, youth and families, with an emphasis on both the impact of poverty and factors contributing to poverty.

3. Focus on an optimal developmental pathway.

Services will be centered on children and youth meeting key milestones in their early development through adulthood, with a particular emphasis on early brain development and kindergarten readiness.

4. Prioritize children, youth and families furthest from opportunity and those at greatest risk for negative outcomes.

Services will be prioritized for those children and youth research has shown to be at highest risk of negative outcomes based on income; geography; and social, demographic or other risk factors.

5. Ensure services are science-based, outcome-driven, data-informed and collaborative.

Data, science and evidence will be used to evaluate and redesign services regardless of which agency has the budget authority to provide them or the reason for the initial referral. Services should be evidence-based, with flexibility to use research-based or promising practices where needed; focused on safety, well-being and other priority outcomes; and aligned and integrated, with collaboration across all state-run and state-funded programs serving children, youth and families. Results will be tracked to ensure they are achieving measurable improvements in the lives of children, youth and families.

6. Improve the connections among children, youth, families and communities.

Well-being of children, youth and families will be improved through stronger connection with communities, with particular focus on addressing multigenerational challenges.

7. Address racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities.

Children, youth and families of all races, ethnicities and cultures will have equitable access, supports and outcomes. Outcome measures will always be transparent regarding any disparities.

8. Ensure programs and services are effective and accountable.

Programs and services will be cost-effective and accountable. Partnerships with nonprofits, institutions of higher education and foundations will be leveraged as opportunities for enhanced research, training and funding capacity.

9. Develop a skilled and supported workforce.

Staff at all levels will receive the training, resources, tools, appropriate compensation and other support needed to meet the agency's goals in an environment driven by innovation, replication of success, use of best practices and educational partnerships, with requisite expertise and sufficient capacity to serve the public well in all parts of the state.

10. Provide leadership and funding to achieve the mission and vision.

The new agency will preserve and continue what is working based on the best evidence available and will make sure there is sufficient funding for the array of needed services, as well as for a well-trained and supported workforce. The agency also will ensure that there are leadership and staff in the department who are not doing the day-to-day service delivery but are directing the innovation, outcome, alignment, integration, collaboration, transition and redesign work.

What We Heard and What We Learned

As part of the groundwork for its decision-making, the commission sought answers to the following questions:

- ❖ What have been the experiences of those who have used or worked in the state’s systems?
“We are all dealing with the same families but not coordinating.”
– Provider
- ❖ What do the available data tell us about how children, youth and families are doing now in our state?
- ❖ What can research teach us about the barriers to well-being and the most effective approaches to achieving better outcomes?

The commission heard testimony, conducted extensive stakeholder outreach and interviewed those who led similar reform efforts in other states, foundation leaders and other experts in these disciplines. (See Appendix C for a list of speakers, presenters and key informants.)

- ❖ The commission’s online and paper surveys generated 1,371 responses (182 consumers, 536 providers, 356 members of the public social service workforce and 297 dependency court representatives).ⁱⁱ Feedback came from stakeholders in 37 of 39 Washington counties.
- ❖ Eleven focus groups were held, involving 153 participants. Groups included consumers, providers, members of the CA workforce and tribal representatives.
- ❖ Twenty-two key informants were interviewed, including child welfare and human services agency leaders, researchers and other national experts on systems integration and related issues.

Their insights provided critical confirmation of the potential benefits, opportunities and challenges of a reform effort that creates a cabinet-level department for children and families. Those providing input who had been involved in similar structural reforms in other jurisdictions also shared lessons learned and identified potential pitfalls. Stakeholders and key informants emphasized the importance of shared values within an integrated agency, and advocated for a continued focus on the child, youth and family experience and elevating the child, youth and family voice. They articulated the need for

a careful transition to avoid disruption of the child welfare system. They also cautioned the commission to avoid diverting resources away from critical services to fund creation of the new agency. They urged the commission to address the entire child/youth age continuum, rather than focusing narrowly on the youngest children.

The feedback confirmed that stakeholders value being kept informed and engaged. Stakeholders recommended using vehicles such as advisory or consumer boards to continue to gather feedback throughout the transition, and to guide further system improvements, innovations and reform.

Themes from Stakeholder Input – Consumers, Providers and Workforce

Findings from stakeholder surveys and focus groups were organized into four inquiry areas:

- ❖ What challenges do children, youth and families face?
- ❖ How should the service system respond?
- ❖ What does it take to provide an effective response?
- ❖ How can positive outcomes be sustained?

What challenges do children, youth and families face?

Vulnerable children, youth and families have multiple, complex needs. Those most frequently cited by respondents included poverty, substance abuse, mental health concerns, child neglect, domestic violence, housing instability, unemployment and managing a child with complex needs.

How should the service system respond?

The themes were clear:

- ❖ Listen to families.
- ❖ Build family capacity for self-sufficiency.
- ❖ Provide the right services at the right time.
- ❖ Cultivate a culturally responsive service system by attending to biases that diminish equity. (This includes addressing equity issues around racial/ethnic, social-economic, geographic and other disparities.)
- ❖ Simultaneously and systematically address economic and psychosocial issues.

What does it take to provide an effective response?

Respondents offered valuable suggestions to create a more effective response for children, youth and families. They reflected the following broad themes:

- ❖ Retool the system for prevention.
- ❖ Reinforce consistent practice standards.
- ❖ Realign the system to achieve outcomes (e.g., through more manageable caseloads, better integrated services and strong data analysis).
- ❖ Prepare the workforce to do the job (through enhanced training and support).
- ❖ Align workforce and provider partners. (Some key areas for improvement included joint intakes and assessments, shared understanding of child, youth and family strengths and needs, coordination of efforts toward common service delivery goals, clear roles and responsibilities among team members, and confidentiality protocols for information-sharing.)

“How do we envision a community where [stigmatization of birth families] is reduced, and ... we’re just families at the end of the day? I just really benefitted from people reminding me that I’m a worthy woman and believing in me, all along the way. That’s what I’m hoping we can create.”

– Former child welfare services recipient, current parent ally

How can positive outcomes be sustained?

Respondents identified two critical areas of focus for sustaining positive outcomes:

- ❖ **Sustain family stability.** This included specific strategies such as the following:
 - Expand use of home visitation.
 - Coordinate access to public health services and maternal support services.
 - Expand use of progressive parent-child visitation.
 - Increase post-permanency support, particularly after reunification with families of origin.

“My hope is to try to think about how ... we can try to wrap around prior to the need for removing children out of care. And if that conversation happens ... what could we do to try to keep these children in home? ... I think there’s a lot that we could be doing to try to avoid the additional trauma our beautiful young children face from entering foster care.”

- Former child welfare services recipient, current parent ally

- Cultivate community connections, so families can lean on a circle of support after services end.
- Expand the use of wraparound principles and practices.
- ❖ **Optimize outcomes.** In this area, stakeholders recommended strategies such as the following:
 - Replicate and scale effective programs and models that are adequately funded.
 - Address staff retention issues, including manageable caseloads, improved pay, and better resourced and trained workers.
 - Follow the legal timelines for reunification or termination of parental rights.
 - Provide more comprehensive training for all involved in child protection and family support.
 - Strengthen family-centered practice.
 - Improve teamwork, collaboration and partnership.
 - Increase availability and access to high-demand services.

The survey feedback, focus group input and insights from key informants also surfaced differences in viewpoints and perspectives that have been important to consider in developing recommendations for the new department. Issues that surfaced included the following:

- ❖ Varying perspectives about how families interact or should interact with public social service systems.
- ❖ The perception of having to choose between child safety and well-being and parent/family-strengthening.
- ❖ Improved and more consistent communication between the social service workforce and consumers.
- ❖ Differences in the perspectives of foster parents, CA social workers and court staff about the ability of birth parents and kin to make positive changes.

“I’m a front-line worker. Accessing mental health for a client of mine is nearly impossible. Getting into chemical dependency [treatment], at a time when they’re ready to make that happen ... I’m telling someone go use for another month and a half, and come back... I’ve had clients die in that month and a half.”

– Former child welfare services recipient, current parent ally

Themes from Key Informant Input

Benefits of a reform effort creating a cabinet-level department focused on children, youth and families:

- ❖ Clear attention of the Governor and the Legislature, with equal footing with other cabinet-level agencies.
- ❖ Potential for coordinating and sequencing services for children, youth and families in a single agency.
- ❖ More autonomy over budget, policy and program decisions.
- ❖ Potential to minimize bureaucracy.
- ❖ Ability to build a platform for the use of data to evaluate program performance and effectiveness. Using this data platform and coordinating with other agencies allows real-time intervention when issues occur.

Benefits of connecting child welfare and early learning systems:

- ❖ Opportunities for children involved in child welfare to receive developmental screenings and services, and high-quality early learning opportunities. Child care has been demonstrated to reduce fatalities among children in child welfare.
- ❖ Ability to link child welfare families to home visiting programs that fit their needs.
- ❖ Opportunity to strengthen family stability and child safety by focusing on healthy child development and prevention in addition to safety and permanency.
- ❖ Promotion of a less adversarial relationship with families than is traditionally found in the child welfare context. Without compromising on safety investigation work, CA has successfully implemented a strengths-based family engagement model, Family Assessment Response (FAR), for children and youth who are not in immediate danger of harm. This model could be expanded to include more families, and the lessons learned from FAR can be incorporated into investigation practice.
- ❖ Significant cultural shift that promotes recalibrating and reorienting systems around being proactive, as well as reactive.

Key lessons from social service agency leadership in other states:

- ❖ It is critical to stay focused on the vision.
- ❖ Approach change from the client (child, youth and family) lens rather than based on funding, programmatic, administrative and service silos, recognizing federal and state funding constraints.
- ❖ The use of data, consistent measurement of outcomes and the use of evaluation are important to manage the day-to-day work of an effective integrated system and to analyze the value of new ideas/innovation.
- ❖ Integrating cultures of agencies can be a significant challenge and takes time.
- ❖ It is important to pay attention to the infrastructure and administrative considerations, including information technology, human resources, communications, facilities, fiscal and other essential functions.
- ❖ It is important to develop an optimal transition timeframe; states have varied in their approaches to transition. (In Washington, DEL was created quickly and without adequate start-up funding.)

Additional takeaways from the stakeholder input:

- ❖ Analyze outcome data for all functions contained in the new department — such as services to families, licensing and adequacy of training — to identify what is working and what can be improved.
- ❖ Engage consumers and other stakeholders throughout the change process. Use stakeholder input and findings to further improvement, innovation and reform as this change effort and others are initiated.

What the Data Tell Us About How Children, Youth and Families Are Doing in Washington

Various sets of data informed the commission's assessment of how children, youth and families are doing in the state. The selection of data below highlights some of the issues that the commission determined were important to address. (See Appendix D for additional details on these data points.)

It is important to note, in part due to the limited time available to complete its work, the commission did not conduct an in-depth analysis of performance of those agencies currently providing child, youth and family services (CA, DEL and other agencies) to develop its recommendations. In the Recommendations section of this report we suggest an in-depth review of the current performance and strategy of each existing agency.

How Are Children, Youth and Families Doing Economically?

Data in this section often refer to The Annie E. Casey Family Foundation's *KIDS COUNT 2016 Data Book*.ⁱⁱⁱ

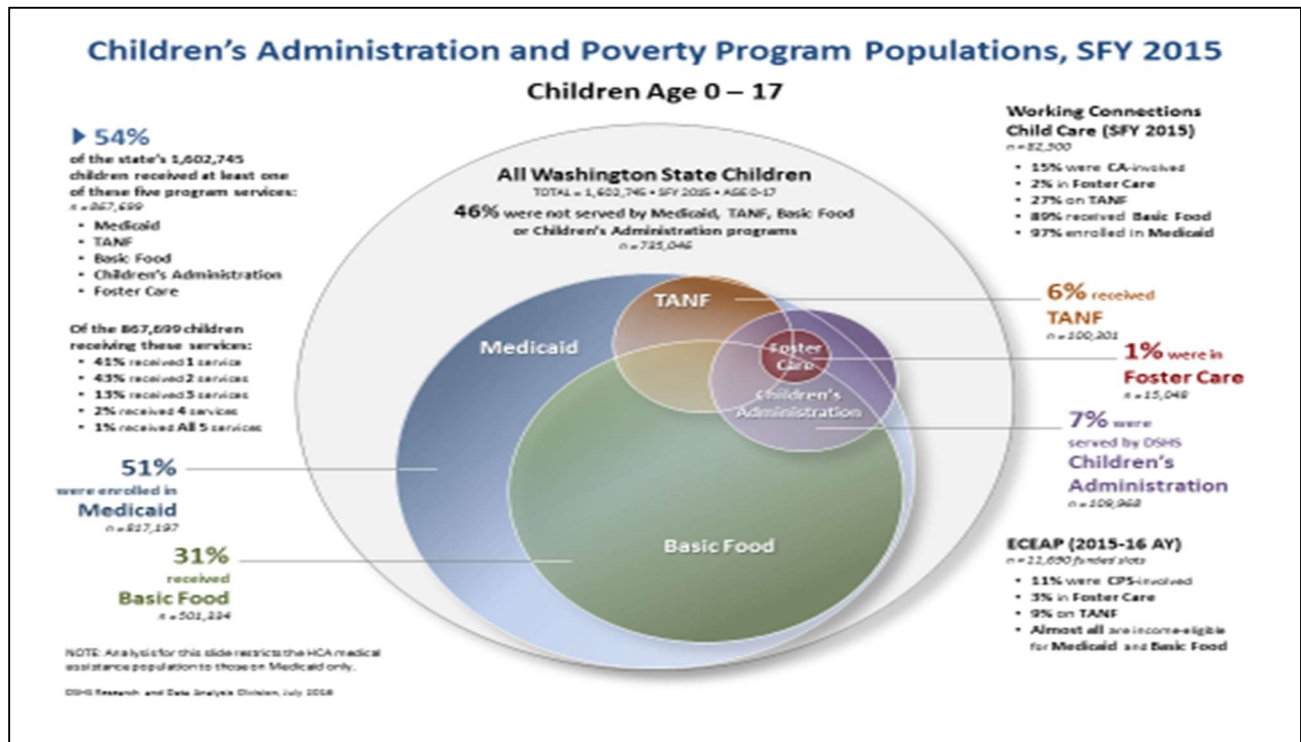
Poverty

According to KIDS COUNT, 18 percent of children in Washington (276,000 children) are living in poverty, a statistic that worsened last year. In 2008, only 14 percent of our children were living in poverty. Another key indicator of economic security is the percentage of children (29 percent) whose parents lack secure employment. This indicator also worsened since 2008. Washington ranked 26th in a comparison of economic security for children across all 50 states.

Poverty and Involvement in Multiple Systems

Figure 1 shows the overlap between family income and use of services from the state. Poverty is a significant predictor of involvement in the child welfare system. Most of the children at risk of suboptimal outcomes are involved in multiple services from the state.

Figure 1: Overlap of Service Populations



Source: DSHS – RDA

For more detail, see Appendix D.

How Are Children and Youth Doing in School?

As reported by OSPI through the Washington State Report Card (<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/>), educational progress is being monitored across the child age continuum.

Kindergarten Readiness

Kindergarten readiness is measured by the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) across the following domains: physical development, social emotional development, literacy, cognitive development, language and math.

Based on 2015–16 school year data, 44 percent of Washington's children entering kindergarten met the national benchmark for kindergarten readiness in all six categories. For more detail, see: <http://www.k12.wa.us/WaKIDS/Data/WaKIDS-2015-data-summary.pdf>

There is significant income and racial disparity in these outcomes. Low-income children are much less likely (34 percent) to meet this standard than their more advantaged peers (59 percent). Asian (52 percent), white (51 percent), and multiracial children (49 percent) were kindergarten ready at a higher percentage than the state average (44 percent); whereas the percentage of African-American (41 percent), Native American/Pacific Islander (35 percent), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (34 percent), and Latino children (31 percent) who were kindergarten ready fell below the state average.

Positive Trends

2016 KIDS COUNT data have identified positive trends in Washington, aligned with those on a national scale, in the following areas:

- ❖ Fourth grade reading proficiency
- ❖ Eighth grade math proficiency
- ❖ On-time high school graduation
- ❖ Decreasing frequency of teens abusing drugs and alcohol

High School Graduation

Consistent with changes in other states, the high school graduation rate in Washington has incrementally improved over the past few years. In the 2014–15 school year, 78 percent of Washington’s children graduated from high school as expected in four years.

- ❖ Graduation rates for foster youth remain well below those of other children. At 42 percent, the graduation rate for foster youth was about half the rate for their more fortunate peers.
- ❖ For more detail, see:
<http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin/pubdocs/GradDropout/14-15/2014-15GraduationDropoutStatisticsAnnualReport.pdf>

Disciplinary Action

- ❖ About 4 percent of Washington students were expelled or suspended during the 2014–15 school year, with variability among school districts ranging from 0 percent to 10 percent of students, according to OSPI.

- ❖ Reforms have been under way since 2013 around school discipline to improve outcomes.
- ❖ For more detail, see:
<http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/DataAnalytics.aspx#discipline>

What Are Children, Youth and Families Experiencing that Is Causing Them to Come into Contact with Social Service Agencies?

The Impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

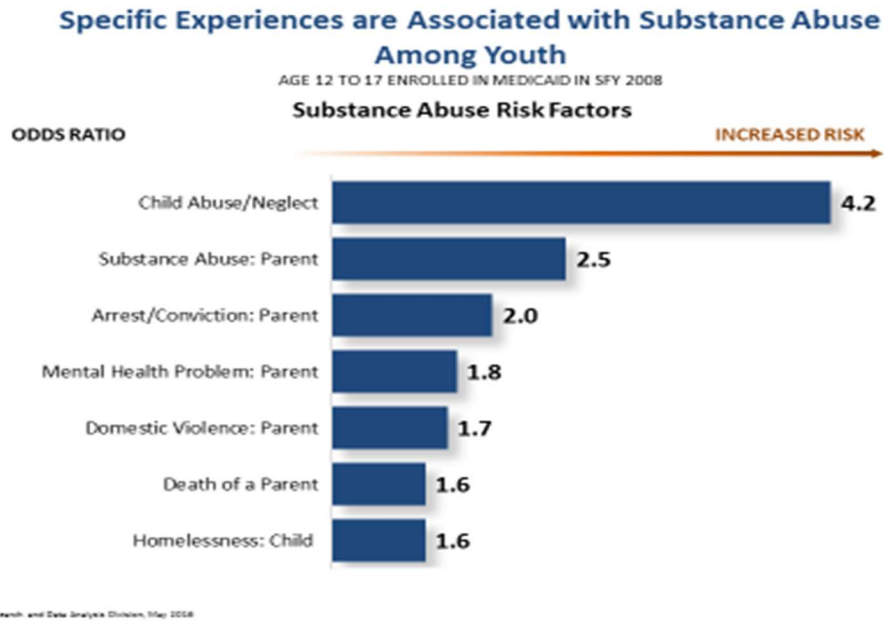
Researchers in Washington have been studying ACEs and have identified characteristics of children and youth who experience ACEs.

As shown in Figure 2 on the following page, ACEs increase the risk for substance abuse and mental health problems, and higher numbers of ACEs increase the risk further. Child abuse and neglect is an ACE that puts a child or youth at an increased risk for these challenges.

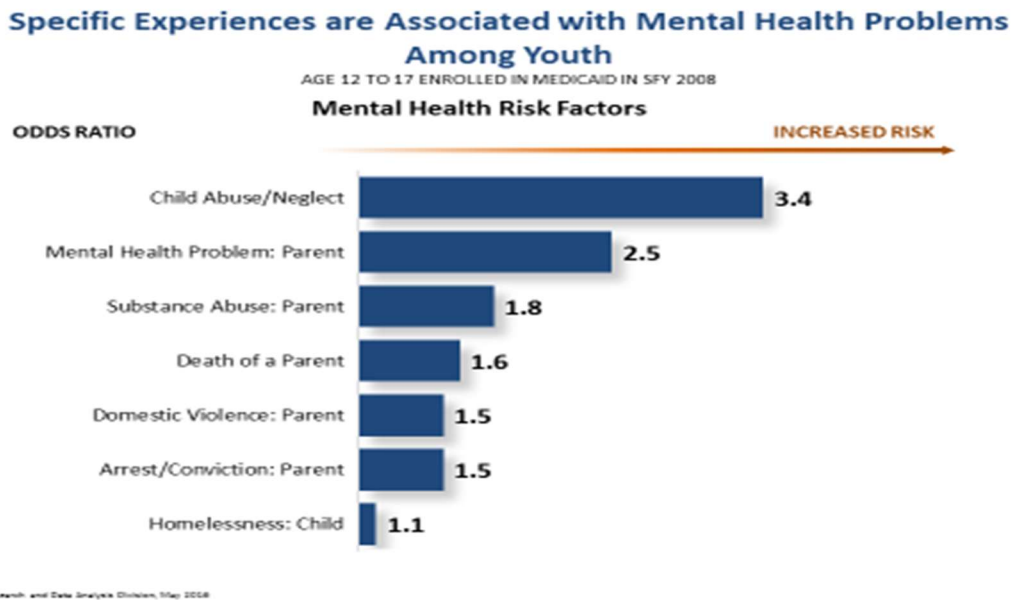
For substantiated allegations of abuse or neglect of children in the child welfare system (CA) between 2010 and 2014:

- ❖ Children ages 0–4 years old have consistently been the largest group of victims, ranging between 38 percent and 42 percent of all victims.
- ❖ Children ages 5–10 years old represent 32 percent to 36 percent of substantiated allegations.
- ❖ Child abuse or neglect allegation types align with national trends:
 - Neglect is the most common substantiated allegation, present in 78 percent to 82 percent of these cases.
 - Physical abuse is present in 19 percent to 23 percent of substantiated allegations.
 - Sexual abuse is found in 6 percent to 7 percent of substantiated cases.

Figure 2: ACEs Associated with Substance Abuse and Mental Health Problems



A child who experiences child abuse or neglect is 4.2 times more likely to abuse substances as an adult.



A child who experiences child abuse or neglect is 3.4 times more likely to suffer from mental health problems as a youth.

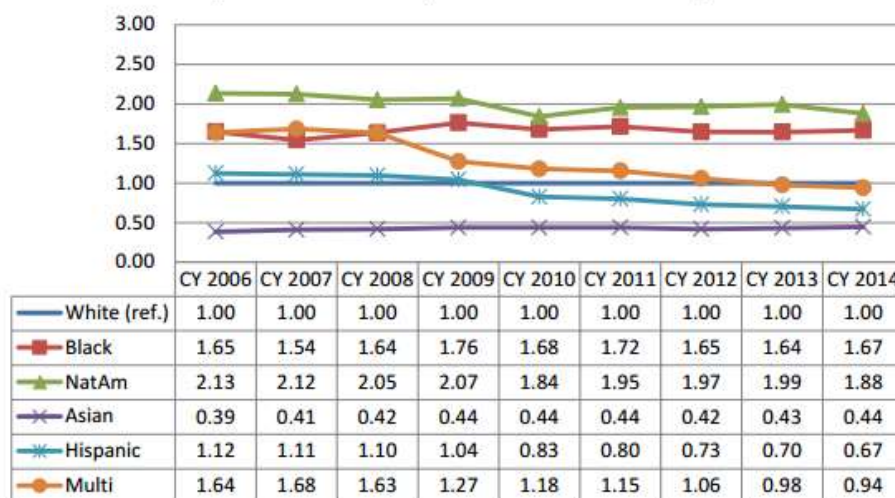
Source: DSHS – RDA

Disproportionality

The Legislature sought to address disproportionality in the child welfare system through SHB 1472. As a result, CA has worked in partnership with the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee on focused efforts to reduce disproportionality. Data is a significant part of the approach, and an annual report summarizes the progress toward that goal.

Figure 3 shows the Disproportionality Index After Referral, the ratio of a racial/ethnic group compared to whites. An index greater than 1.0 shows overrepresentation of a group compared to whites. The index has improved since 2009 for Hispanic and Native American children, and stayed about the same for African-Americans.

Figure 3: Disproportionality Index After Referral



Source: FamLink Data Warehouse

For more detail, see:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CA/acw/documents/RacialDisproLegislativeReport2016.pdf>.

Youth Homelessness

Youth homelessness is identified in several ways in the state. OSPI's data indicate that the number of homeless students has continued to increase significantly during the past several years, with 32,494 homeless students in school during the 2013–14 school year,

approximately 3.1 percent of the student population statewide. This is a 56 percent increase since 2008–09.

Homeless students are much less likely to graduate from high school on time — 51.9 percent compared to the 78 percent statewide average. The highest incidence of homelessness among the student population that school year was experienced by Native American and African-American students, at a rate of 7.6 percent for both racial/ethnic groups. For more detail, see:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2015documents/HomelessStudentsJan2015.pdf>.

In addition, a 2015 study by the Research and Data Analysis Division (RDA) of DSHS looked at 1,213 youth who exited foster care at age 17 in 2011 or 2012. The study found the following:

- ❖ One in four of these youth experienced homelessness.
- ❖ Youth who experienced multiple placements or other placement instability while in foster care have a 1.46 times higher risk of becoming homeless than the typical graduate of foster care. One in three of these children will experience homelessness.
- ❖ Youth who crossed over from child welfare to juvenile justice have a 1.49 times higher risk of becoming homeless.

The number of families with children and youth who are homeless is rising. Research documents the damage, particularly to young children, of family and housing instability. For more detail, see:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-7-106.pdf>.

Crossover Youth

Being involved in the child welfare system is a strong predictor of eventually becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. According to an analysis of 2010 data by the Washington State Center for Court Research:

- ❖ Of all youth referred to juvenile justice in Washington in 2010, 43.9 percent had a history of involvement with the child welfare system.
- ❖ Multisystem youth with a more extensive child welfare history experience their first juvenile justice referral an average of 1.5 years earlier than youth with no child welfare history (13.2 versus 14.7 years old at time of first referral to juvenile justice).

- ❖ The study also found that the younger a child or youth is when entering the child welfare system, the more likely he or she is to enter the juvenile justice system at a younger age.

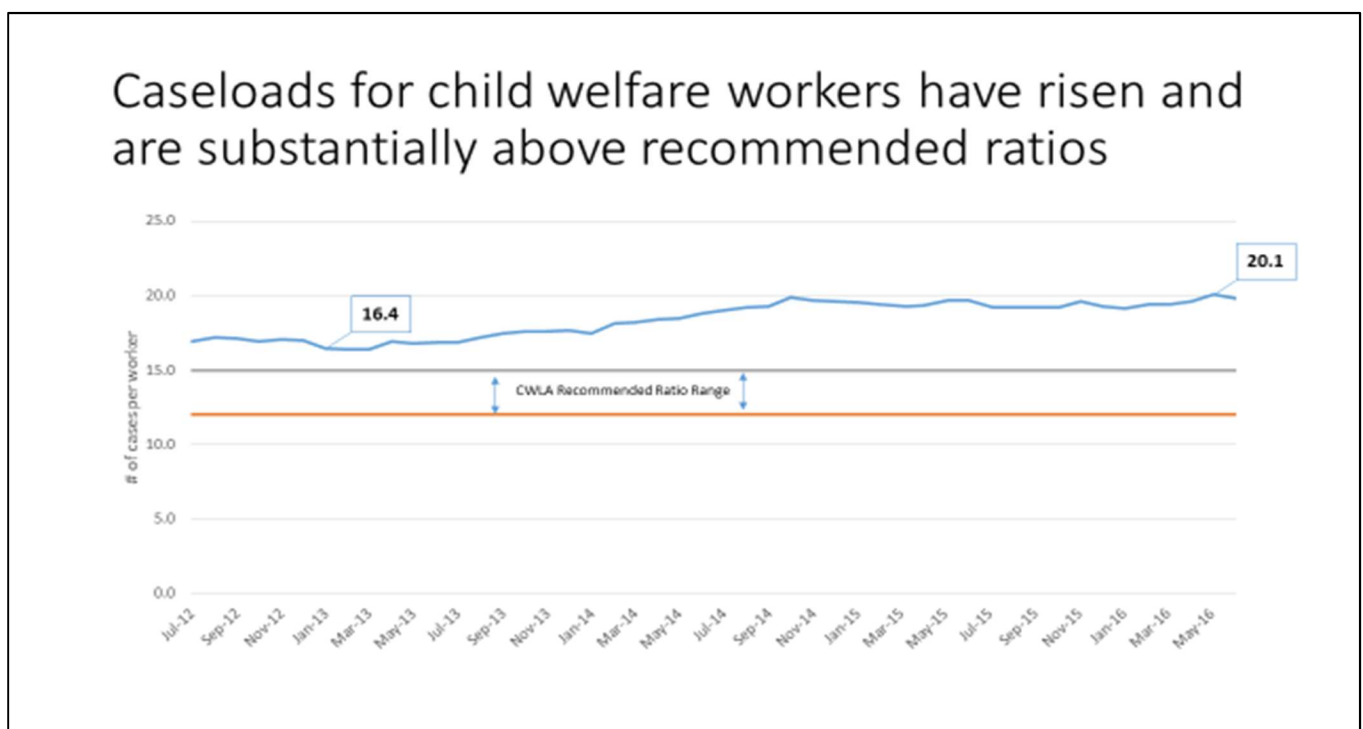
For more detail, see:

http://www.courts.wa.gov/wscrr/docs/MultiSystemYouthInWA_Final.pdf.

Caseloads

Caseloads for child welfare workers (those providing ongoing case management services) have continued to rise well above the recommended range. (See Figure 4.) Large caseloads impair the ability of caseworkers to effectively meet the needs of the children, youth and families in their care. They also impact service delivery, practice, staff morale and staff turnover, all of which negatively affect outcomes for children, youth and families.

Figure 4: Children’s Administration Caseload Data, July 2012 – May 2016



Source: Children’s Administration

Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth in Foster Care

In 1998, a class action lawsuit was filed against DSHS on behalf of foster children in Washington who experienced three or more placements while in foster care — Braam vs. State of Washington. After several years of litigation, the parties agreed to a detailed

settlement agreement requiring CA to improve the system. As of September 2016, nearly all the required outcome measures have been met (and many exceeded) for 18 months, including monthly visits, placement stability, and sibling visits and contact. Outcome areas that CA is continuing to work to meet include caseload, caregiver training and supports, and effectively addressing the needs of runaway youth. For more detail, see:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CA/acw/documents/braam0916Perdashboard.pdf>

Many Washington children and youth could benefit from an improved system of services and support, particularly for those children, youth and families who have contact with multiple systems. As stakeholders indicated, a more consistent focus is needed on earlier prevention and promoting family stability, and improvements in the services themselves, including access, broader adoption of a family-centered approach, and more coordination and teamwork among a highly trained workforce. The use of data to determine effectiveness and build a continuous quality improvement focus across departments serving children, youth and families is crucial to improving the quality of services and providing accountability for their effectiveness.

What Research and Experience Tell Us

To conceptualize a new way of serving children, youth and families in our state, the commission considered research on child development and child and family well-being, the current approach in Washington for providing child and family services, and insight from other states' experiences with similar change processes.

Washington Should Create a New Strategy Based on the Science of Brain Development that Focuses on Outcomes for Children and Youth

Build Upon, Expand and Align Services That Recognize and Support Caregiving as Essential to Healthy Brain Development

Scientific evidence tells us that children's and youth's physical and emotional environments have a direct impact on their brain development, which in turn affects so many aspects of future well-being. Supportive relationships and environments enhance brain functioning, whereas unsupportive environments hamper growth and can have lasting negative effects on learning, behavior, physical health and mental health. Early childhood (ages 0–5) and adolescence are critical windows of opportunity for brain development; however, our brains are susceptible to influence and change throughout our lifetimes.^{iv}

Stable, protective and responsive relationships between children and youth and their caregivers are key to child well-being and prevention of long-term problems and are particularly critical in infancy and early childhood. Such relationships are essential to an infant's very survival and the creation of healthy brain circuitry, helping to keep young children on an optimal developmental pathway.^v

When caregivers do not respond reliably and appropriately, a child's brain development may be negatively impacted. Low-quality, stressful and chaotic caregiving environments impair development of optimal brain structure and generate a stress response in the child that, if it is persistent and unresolved, can have lasting physical and psychological consequences. This "toxic stress" can result from many forms of adversity, including physical abuse as well as chronic neglect, which has been shown to be associated with even more widespread damage to very young children than physical abuse and exposure to domestic violence.^{vi} In these cases, restoring responsive caregiving relationships as quickly as possible can help minimize problems in the long run.^{vii}

A prevention focus to help strengthen the caregiver-child relationship is critically important. Focusing only on children and youth once they are “screened in” for a possible CPS referral, as states have traditionally done, misses the opportunity to interrupt adversity and address the issues creating stress and dysfunction in a family. The earlier interventions can be offered to children, youth and their families, the better children will fare. Interventions must include an emphasis on ensuring and supporting responsive caregiver relationships, which can improve outcomes for children. Prevention also must include support for children and youth who already have experienced harm, to interrupt their progression into deeper service involvement. Families facing financial stress also must be connected with the resources to help them stabilize their lives.

Incorporate Lessons Learned from Science and Research Into the Practice Model for Early Learning, Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice

Child welfare systems are statutorily required to focus on the safety, permanency and well-being of children and youth of all ages, and to provide services necessary for children to reunify with their parents. The commission’s guiding principles and understanding of brain science reflect the importance of linking families involved with child welfare with prevention services such as home visiting; children in child welfare with the high-quality early learning opportunities offered by DEL; and adolescents with services that take into account the fact that adolescence is the most significant period of brain growth after infancy. The commission considered the following:

Early Learning

DEL has incorporated into its practice the science of early learning and the research supporting the power of strong parent-child relationships.

- ❖ High-quality early learning opportunities can help children build social, emotional and cognitive skills to get ready for kindergarten and a successful education career.
- ❖ Early learning experiences also can help children who have experienced adversity return to an optimal developmental pathway.

“Not connecting early learning and child welfare would be a step backward for Washington. The science is clear. Protective, responsive, stable relationships are as fundamental as food and shelter. They are at the same level on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.”

– Jack Shonkoff

- ❖ Research has established that child care can prevent child fatalities for young children involved in child welfare.
- ❖ Evidence- and research-based home visitation programs help parents build strong, healthy relationships with their children and help prevent child abuse and neglect.
- ❖ Home visitation is one of the state’s most effective programs for preventing child abuse and neglect for parents with young children and is valuable to families who are already engaged with child welfare.
- ❖ In cooperation with the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard, DEL is participating in science based research through Frontiers of Innovation to improve parent coaching, including teaching skills to protect children from toxic stress.

Child Welfare

- ❖ ***Child abuse and neglect is an adverse childhood experience (ACE) that puts a child at greater risk of experiencing other challenges.*** DSHS–RDA has found that children and youth experiencing physical abuse, sexual abuse or neglect are at higher risk of mental health or substance abuse issues — four times more likely for substance abuse and three times more likely for mental health issues.^{viii} In addition, many children and youth connected to the child welfare system experience other ACEs, including the death of a parent; parental mental illness, substance abuse, domestic violence or criminal justice involvement; or homelessness. The more ACEs a child or youth endures, the more likely he or she is to experience mental health or substance abuse issues.^{ix} Prevention of ACES, and of further harm when ACES have already occurred, is a priority.
- ❖ ***Children involved with the child welfare system can benefit tremendously from DEL’s focus on screening for developmental delays,*** referring children to early intervention services, and ensuring access to high-quality early learning opportunities that prepare children for kindergarten. Addressing the developmental and emotional issues caused by adversity can prevent later physical, mental and behavioral health disorders.
- ❖ ***The majority of referrals to the child welfare system are for neglect, not abuse,*** both in Washington and nationally. Researchers have found that chronic neglect can

impair brain development due to the absence of responsive care.^x Poverty is often a significant contributing factor to neglect. Addressing families' needs in a prevention or early intervention context could reduce chronic neglect. Evidence-based services and promising practices that effectively meet the needs of chronically neglecting families show promising results. Families also must be connected to material resources to address poverty.

- ❖ ***The child welfare system provides the opportunity to prevent and repair harm to children.*** Although families enter the child welfare system after some form of maltreatment has occurred, a family's contact with child welfare presents a critical opportunity to reduce long-term consequences by preventing further damage, mitigating effects on brain development and restoring healthy child and family functioning. These families experience many complex challenges, such as poverty, mental health and substance abuse issues, or domestic violence. The early learning and child welfare systems currently provide a range of services that help support early child development and strengthen families. We can improve outcomes by building on the most effective interventions, ensuring that children exposed to adversity have access to high-quality early learning opportunities, and promoting positive, responsive relationships for children when they must be removed from their homes for safety reasons.
- ❖ ***The potential benefit of early prevention programs applies to many families who are not involved in child welfare but are at risk.*** Only a small percentage of the state's children will ever come to the attention of the child welfare system because of reported maltreatment. However, many other children and youth will grow up in families where poverty, family conflict, community violence, racial discrimination, parental mental illness, substance use or other forms of adversity lead to some level of difficulty providing an environment where children can thrive.^{xi} Although these children and youth are not known to the child welfare system, they are often connected to other programs, such as child care, early learning, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps), or health care. Brain science tells us that the key to preventing long-term difficulties for these children and youth is the same as it is within the child welfare system: build parenting capacities and enhance the skills of

those who work with children, youth and families to foster relationships and provide positive, responsive interactions.

- ❖ ***Separating child welfare from other early childhood programs unnecessarily stigmatizes families.*** Given that children, youth and families outside of child welfare have some strikingly similar needs to those involved with child welfare, separating child welfare from other early childhood programs presents significant risks for stigmatization of families within the child welfare agency. Placing child welfare within the prevention agency will provide the opportunity for CA policy and practices to embrace the same science-based focus on nurturing relationships, whether in the family or with another caregiver, that is employed in other child- and family-serving programs.
- ❖ ***The child welfare system serves children and youth of all ages.*** The child welfare system addresses the needs of children and youth from birth to adulthood. Young children (ages 0–5) are an important focus of child welfare services, both because of their vulnerability and because there are some unique windows of opportunity for brain development during this period. This is especially true given the increasing numbers of younger children coming to the attention of child welfare. However, school-age children and adolescents involved with child welfare require the same attention to stable, nurturing relationships, services to address their needs, and educational supports to help them graduate from high school with their peers and then successfully transition into adulthood.

Juvenile Justice and Other Services for Adolescents

Washington has a demonstrated track record of reducing recidivism for youth in the state juvenile justice system and reinvesting resources back into communities. We should build on that strength in the new agency.

- ❖ ***Adolescence is a critical period for brain development. Services, policies, practices and experiences provided through DCYF should support healthy brain development and a positive trajectory into adulthood.*** The brains of children of all ages (and even young adults) are developing. Even when trauma and ACEs are present in the lives of children and youth, their brains are capable of growth and

repair through supportive relationships.^{xii} Moreover, child abuse and neglect can impact the brain development of adolescents well into their adulthood.^{xiii} Therefore, older children and youth are an important focus for any holistic approach to supporting the well-being of children.

- ❖ ***Similarities in service needs between adolescent youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems suggest the state should develop stronger connections between these systems and rethink how both systems deliver services to adolescent youth.*** Youth known to both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems may suffer from the same types of childhood trauma, are often underserved as they move from one system to another, and represent a large portion of the youth who experience homelessness. In a recent report regarding homeless youth/young adults in Washington, it was noted that 48 percent of those being discharged from a chemical dependency residential program, 28 percent of youth aging out of foster care at 18, and 26 percent of youth exiting a state institution or residential program are homeless within one year.^{xiv} Adolescents who are not living at home but are surviving on streets, and yet are not a dependent of the state, do not have many options. These adolescents, particularly those who have had cross-system involvement, multiple placements or episodes of running away, would be better served with earlier identification of risk factors to allow for timelier intervention and a broader array of culturally and developmentally sound placement options.
- ❖ ***The state should develop shared goals and align strategies that support healthy development, strengthen family relationships, and ultimately reduce child welfare and juvenile justice involvement.*** Critical prevention and intervention opportunities to minimize system involvement or harm are often missed because of fragmented and siloed service delivery. Aligning strategies and goals around strength-based opportunities for engagement, whether with a family or an adolescent, will improve positive outcomes for children, youth and families and will reduce system involvement and the trauma associated with it. An emphasis on stabilizing and helping youth identify pathways that include success will minimize negative outcomes such as homelessness or incarceration.
- ❖ ***In Washington, 43 percent of the youth involved with the juvenile justice system are either involved in the child welfare system or have been in the past.***

Research shows that youth involved in both systems (sometimes referred to as “dual-system” or “crossover” youth) are among the youth with the highest risk of negative outcomes. They often suffer the consequences of too little cross-system coordination, including information-sharing, assessment, and multidisciplinary team case planning. Outcomes in adulthood are worse than for those solely served by the child welfare system, in terms of use of public resources, jail stays and unemployment.^{xv}

- ❖ ***A growing body of research also has documented that child maltreatment is associated with increased risk of delinquency and criminality.*** Studies have found that childhood abuse and neglect are associated with a 59 percent higher risk of arrest as a juvenile, 28 percent higher risk of arrest as an adult, and 30 percent higher risk of committing a violent crime.^{xvi} Research indicates there are greater opportunities to identify youth who are at high risk for delinquency, effective interventions that will prevent further involvement in the system, and services to reduce additional risk factors and improve long-term outcomes. Research also shows some child abuse prevention programs have been effective in reducing future crime and delinquency.^{xvii}
- ❖ ***Studies have shown that increased integration of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems can increase opportunities for prevention and improve outcomes for youth in both systems.*** Outcomes include improved mental health, decreased academic and behavioral problems over time, and improved family engagement.^{xviii} When the child welfare and juvenile justice systems share the goal of keeping children and youth on a healthy developmental trajectory, then organizational culture, staffing, treatment and service providers work together to meet these goals. Aligning and innovating for shared goals also can help the systems be more responsive and effective for children, youth and families of color, who are overrepresented in both systems.

Alignment of Services for Children, Youth and Families Is Essential

The commission recognized the importance of a service delivery system that is comprehensive and that goes beyond a single department’s work. To that end, the commission prioritized creating a mechanism to align and integrate services for children,

youth and their families across state agencies for a seamless service experience, whether they are being served by this new department or by another state agency.

Having a focus on all youth at greatest risk of negative outcomes, whether they come into contact with the early learning system, the child welfare system, the juvenile justice system or multiple systems, provides the state an opportunity to look beyond the historical practices of these systems, develop a more coherent and integrated approach, and increase prevention and early intervention services that will improve the long-term outcomes for youth. The creation of a separate Office of Innovation and Alignment in the new department is critical to the accomplishment of this goal.

Disparity Impacts Children, Youth and Families Across Systems and Must Be Addressed as a Fundamental Underpinning of the New Approach

Providing equitable access to services and supports is a commission priority, whether related to issues of race or ethnicity, socioeconomic conditions, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, geography (urban and rural areas, distinct regions of the state, Native American reservations) or other disparities. The use and analysis of data, both quantitative and qualitative, is vital to identify where equity concerns exist. Providing formal and informal opportunities for interacting with culturally, racially, economically and geographically diverse communities is critical as the new department assesses needs, aligns the right services to needs, and redesigns the child, youth and family service experience.

Youth of color are disproportionately impacted at every point in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and the disproportionality is cumulative at every point in the system. Strategies that more effectively prevent all youth from becoming further involved in the juvenile justice system will thus have a powerful effect on disproportionality because they will occur earlier in the justice system process.

Washington Should Create a New Department to Implement This New Approach

Build the New Department Upon the Existing Organizational Structure of the Department of Early Learning

Ten years ago, the Legislature created a new department, which built an entirely new infrastructure from the ground up. The commission is proposing to leverage the existing

structure of DEL in combination with the significant resources of CA and JR to create the new agency.

This approach provides the opportunity to build on the strengths of both DEL and CA, to identify and minimize duplication of services, align services and develop more holistic supports for children, youth and families. The new department would build on existing capacity to create the organizational capacity necessary to effectively meet the needs of a larger agency.

A Robust Data and Technology Capability Is Fundamental to Improving Outcomes for Children, Youth and Families

Washington has continued to demonstrate a commitment to the use of data and related technology to develop an understanding of who is being served, for what purpose and to what end. This new department's technology needs to align with that commitment and ensure that data sets can be made accessible across programs for those served by the new department and those served within DSHS, DOH and other departments. The technology investment is critical and will support progress by identifying outcomes and promoting a culture of continuous quality improvement.

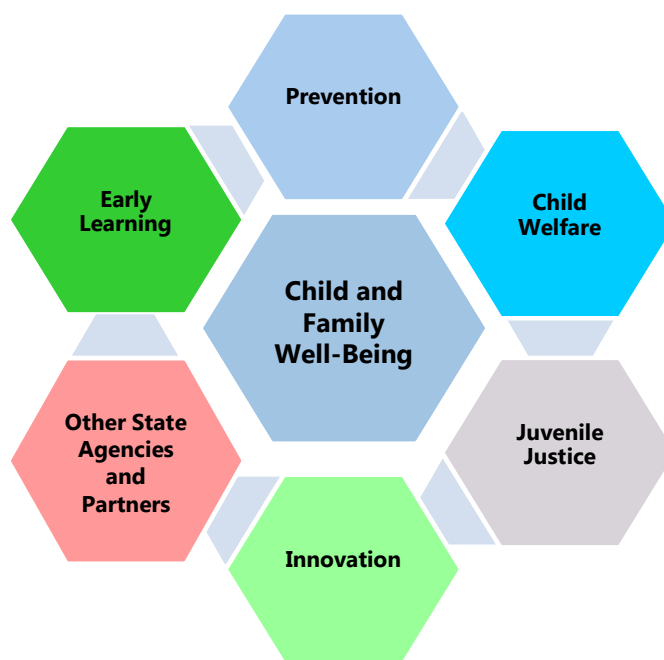
Implementation of the New Approach Focusing on Addressing Risk Factors and Intervening Early Can Reduce Costs

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) has identified examples of programs serving children, youth and families that have a positive cost benefit. The Nurse Home Visitation Program has been found to save seven dollars for each dollar invested. In Illinois, an effort to provide comprehensive in-home services for delinquent youth rather than incarceration has yielded substantial savings — for every \$1 million spent on the program, the state avoided approximately \$3.55 million that would have been spent on juvenile incarceration.^{xix} These are examples of programs that can improve outcomes for children and youth, *and* reduce public expenditures in the future.

Cost Savings Should Be Reinvested to Address Service Gaps with Evidence- and Research-Based Interventions

This approach provides opportunities for savings that can then be used to increase the availability of and access to services that are better aligned with the needs of children,

youth and families across the state. For instance, the Family Impact Network used data to reduce the number of missed visits between children in foster care and their birth parents. They used this efficiency to redeploy staff on more effective parent visitation models. Consumers and those working to provide services told us uniformly that services need to be much more readily available if we are to successfully intervene earlier and help prevent deeper system involvement. Additional investment in needed services is critical to improving outcomes. Reinvestment of savings is one strategy for accomplishing that goal.



Recommendations

After reviewing research, hearing from stakeholders and studying data regarding how children, youth and families are faring in our state today, the commission concluded the following:

- ❖ ***State services are not currently organized in a way that achieves the best outcomes for children, youth and families.*** There should be a single department whose mission is centered on child safety, early learning, and the social, emotional and physical well-being of children, youth and families — supporting and strengthening families before crises occur.
- ❖ ***We should build on current strengths and successes of the Department of Early Learning (DEL).*** Our state’s youngest children and families have already benefitted considerably from this state-level focus. We must expand this work and continue to strive for and prioritize early learning, prevention and early intervention.
- ❖ ***Parents and families who are facing challenges must be offered needed and appropriate services earlier to improve the healthy development of children and youth, protect them from harm and disrupt multigenerational trauma.***

- ❖ ***We should use this opportunity to improve the effectiveness of how and when services are delivered, with a much greater focus on prevention and recognition of the importance of caregiving to healthy brain development.***

What we know about the importance of stable, nurturing relationships for children — as well as the impact of trauma — must be incorporated into the practice model for early learning, child welfare and juvenile justice, including the courts.

- ❖ ***We should strengthen the collective impact of all services provided by the state to children, youth and families, no matter which agency is the lead for providing them, by making sure they are science-based, have aligned outcomes, share real-time data and create a more cohesive continuum of care.***

This will help the state make maximum use of its resources by allocating funding and services in ways that are consistently aligned with the best practices for serving children, youth and families. For those involved with any state system, there should be more seamless connections whenever possible to other needed services, for instance the use of Medicaid-funded services, that will help to minimize additional system involvement or harm.

- ❖ ***We should prioritize those children and youth most at risk of neglect, physical harm, sexual abuse and other adverse factors most often linked to low rates of kindergarten readiness, dropping out of school, substance abuse, incarceration, homelessness and other negative outcomes later in life.***

- ❖ ***We should integrate the Children’s Administration (CA) with DEL to better ensure that children get access to help and services early in life, when it can give them the foundation they need and put them on a path to healthy development and success in school.***

- ❖ ***We should also integrate Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) and the Office of Juvenile Justice into the new department to better address all youth who are at one time or another in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.***

- ❖ ***We should ensure focused attention on adolescents, with this new agency having primary responsibility for helping the state achieve better outcomes for youth in this age cohort.*** Adolescent brain development is a critical period and an opportunity to change a youth’s trajectory into adulthood. Older children and

youth also are an important focus for any holistic approach to supporting the well-being of children.

- ❖ ***We should ensure that the programs and services of this department are tightly aligned or integrated with essential services such as economic supports that address poverty, and access to behavioral health services.***

- ❖ ***We should strengthen the linkages to K–12 schools to ensure that children and youth who are struggling or disengaged from school are identified early and that resources in the new department, schools and communities are mobilized and coordinated to support students' continued progress toward graduation.***
Access to needed behavioral health services must be streamlined and integrated to ensure timely provision of help to keep children and youth on a trajectory toward academic success.

By realigning our systems and programs, rethinking our practice models and using data differently, many things could be improved for children, youth and families:

- ✓ What if we could connect a child missing school with a community agency that could check in on the family to see if they could use some help, voluntarily?

- ✓ What if every foster child could get the mental health services they needed by walking into a "same day appointment"?

- ✓ What if every child under 5 years old coming into contact with the child welfare system were referred to a high-quality early learning program?

- ✓ What if a child care program that identified a new mom who was depressed could ensure that she is screened and has access to treatment?

- ✓ What if we could make sure that a foster child, living in a new home, could stay in the same early learning program and hang her backpack on the same hook every day?

- ✓ What if every young child entering child welfare were screened for developmental delays and referred to appropriate services?

- ✓ What if foster parents had access to support when the child living with them was in crisis?
- ✓ What if a youth didn't have to be "justice-involved," potentially saddled with financial obligations and a record that makes it harder to get an education, a job and housing, in order to get an assessment and services?
- ✓ What if a child, youth or parent could go to their local school as a hub to get connected with the services they need?
- ✓ What if homeless families across the state could access high-quality early learning opportunities and support for their children?
- ✓ What if education advocates could access children's school records to monitor progress in terms of attendance, test scores, disciplinary actions and grades?

In order to realize this vision, the commission recommends the following:

1. Create the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) building on the existing infrastructure of DEL. Create a state agency that fulfills the promise of the Blue Ribbon Commission's (BRC's) guiding principles of improving outcomes by focusing on early learning, prevention, early intervention, child safety and child, youth and family well-being. The work of the agency will be guided by the following vision, mission, and related fundamental elements:

- ❖ **Vision:** All Washington's children and youth grow up safe and healthy — thriving physically, emotionally and educationally, nurtured by family and community.
- ❖ **Mission:** DCYF, in partnership with state and local agencies, tribes and communities, protects children and youth from harm and promotes healthy child development and child, youth and family well-being with effective, high-quality prevention, intervention and early education services delivered in an equitable manner.
- ❖ **Priority Population:** The priority population includes children and youth (ages birth to 21) and their families who are at highest risk of adverse child and family experiences that often lead to poor academic, social and emotional outcomes, as

well as involvement in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Based on data presented to the BRC, six risk factors characterizing children’s households — mental health concerns, substance abuse, criminal justice involvement, domestic violence, chronic illness and poverty — are the best predictors of future involvement with state systems.

- ❖ **Desired Outcomes:** The following high-level outcomes must be expressed by specific measures, which will be developed by the leadership of the new agency.
 - Improving the cognitive, social, emotional and health outcomes for higher risk children, youth, parents and families
 - Preventing child abuse and neglect
 - Improving child and youth safety, permanency and well-being
 - Improving child development and school readiness through voluntary, high-quality early learning opportunities
 - Improving reconciliation of children and youth with their families
 - Promoting more successful transitions of youth to adulthood
 - Reducing criminal justice involvement and recidivism
 - Promoting successful reintegration with family and community, housing stability, job training and stable employment for youth involved in the juvenile justice system
 - Reducing future demand for mental health and substance abuse treatment
 - Preventing racial disparity in system involvement and across child and youth outcomes
 - Increasing employment and economic self-sufficiency

- ❖ **Structure:** Understanding of brain science reflects the importance of stronger connections and a continuum-of-care approach among early learning and the other early childhood services provided by DEL, the child welfare system, and juvenile justice and other services for adolescents. The new agency, DCYF, would retain a focus on early learning, using the existing infrastructure of DEL. It would encompass the programs currently operated by DSHS within CA, JR and the Office of Juvenile Justice.

❖ **Functions:** The new department will include the following:

- Beginning July 1, 2018, DCYF will include prevention/early intervention services, early learning programs and child care licensing, currently administered by DEL; and child protective services including FAR, child welfare case management, in-home support services, adoption support, out-of-home licensing functions and extended foster care for youth up to age 21, currently administered by CA.
- Beginning with the transition, an Office of Innovation and Alignment inside the new agency will lead ongoing systems reform work, including helping to create a data-focused environment in which there are aligned outcomes and shared accountability for achieving them. All partners must be clear that the state can only achieve this vision if there is shared, real-time data that is accessible to everyone interacting with the family, child or youth to know what is needed and which services would be effective. This office would focus on continuous improvement; alignment and measuring of outcomes; data-sharing across state agencies and key statewide private and community partners; and quality assurance and evaluation. It would work with OFM on development of a children, youth and families budget. It also would lead partnerships with research and teaching institutions, the philanthropic community and community partners, helping to create and maintain a culture that embraces innovation and collaborative relationships with external stakeholders. Each year, in collaboration with key stakeholders, the Office of Innovation and Alignment would produce an annual work plan with priorities for ongoing policy, practice and system reform, as well as tracking and reporting out on the performance of its reforms accomplished to date. The office also would create an advisory commission to provide ongoing input and additional accountability for implementation of reforms in practice, policy and systems.
- In July 2019, DCYF will transition in services currently administered by JR and the Office of Juvenile Justice, which includes staff support for the Washington Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice and the Juvenile Court Block Grant that supports evidence-based programs provided by local government for juvenile offenders. Programs in JR include juvenile rehabilitation institutions, community facilities and parole.

- The new department should conduct an analysis of additional prevention and early intervention programs operated outside of DCYF by December 1, 2017, and make a recommendation to the Governor about inclusion of programs that meet the criteria established by the commission. Given the significant increased risk of homelessness among multisystem youth, the Year 3 work plan should include an assessment as to whether the Office for Youth Homelessness (OYH) currently located in COM should be included in DCYF.

Additional considerations include the following:

- ❖ **Equity, Disproportionality and Disparities:** The new department must prioritize addressing equity, disproportionality and disparity issues. Disaggregated data on service quality, accessibility and utilization by race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and geographic areas will ensure transparency and accountability. Deeper analysis of ways in which institutionalized racism and structural inequities exist in the system will focus system transformation efforts. Stakeholder involvement should be structured to ensure regular feedback on service quality, customer experience and equity.
- ❖ **Tribal Considerations:** In the design process, the new department should ensure that state-tribal considerations are prioritized and that tribal consultation occurs throughout the process with the 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington. In addition, the new department and its partners should prioritize culturally responsive strategies and acknowledgement of tribal sovereignty when working with children, youth and families from non-federally recognized tribes in Washington and tribes from out of state.
- ❖ **Workforce:** The work of the new agency will only be as good as its workforce — both the direct employees and community-based vendors. Increased support for the professionals working with children, youth and families is critical to improving outcomes. For early childhood educators, this requires supports and incentives to grow and retain a highly qualified, diverse workforce; appropriate compensation that accounts for the skills, education and experience required to deliver quality; professional development opportunities; and a stronger higher education pipeline for preparing teachers. For child welfare caseworkers, this requires caseload ratios that meet national standards, significant training and coaching to stabilize and retain

the workforce, support to address the impacts of trauma, and reclassification of caseworkers with appropriate compensation levels that reflect the skills and judgment needed to work with the complexity of issues families face. Research suggests that building supervisory leadership capacity, providing support for child welfare caseworkers, and creating a positive workplace climate all contribute to lower rates of staff turnover and increased job satisfaction. In addition, existing relationships with public universities can be further developed by DCYF to leverage federal training resources.

2. Include an adolescent unit in DCYF with primary responsibility for helping the state achieve better outcomes for youth in this age cohort, focused on the BRC guiding principles of intervention approaches that will help to minimize further or additional system involvement or harm. Services should be prioritized for those youth whom research has shown to be at highest risk of negative outcomes in education, employment, health and other domains and be science-based, outcome-driven, data-informed and accountable. Addressing racial and ethnic disproportionality is central to the mission of this new unit.

Adolescence is a critical period for brain development. The work of the new department should support healthy brain development and a positive trajectory into adulthood, including helping to reduce the criminalization of behaviors that stem from trauma or child welfare involvement. In order to reduce youth crossing over between child welfare and juvenile justice and vice versa, there should be additional focus on key transition points such as transitions out of foster care and institutions or youth moving from the child welfare system to the juvenile justice system. Attention must be paid to the service needs of teenagers, including these “crossover” youth, such as an appropriate risk assessment tool and research-based, evidence-based, promising practices and programs for youth served across both systems. Data-sharing agreements between and among the juvenile justice system, child welfare system and courts should be regularly reviewed to inform changes to practice. To do this work, the department should assess the best ways to maximize potential use of federal funding such as title IV-E and Medicaid funding for a broader array of out-of-home services options for youth in the juvenile justice system who are in need of services, as has been done successfully in Multnomah County, Oregon,^{xx} to help provide alternatives to detention and further enhance services at the local level for this population.

The new department should promote options for juvenile justice diversion at the early stages of juvenile court involvement by creating community-based placement options for youth in foster care, and develop ways in which the Child in Need of Services process can be broadened to create safe and affirming placements for adolescents.

3. Using the BRC's Considerations for Inclusion or Immediate Alignment/Integration, identify which other specific services and programs should be housed in the new department and which should be closely aligned.

“Services and supports are entirely too fragmented. Policy needs to wear the consumer hat and the on-the-ground provider hat, then apply some Continuous Quality Improvement to our disjointed system.”

– CA workforce stakeholder

The commission developed a set of criteria and conditions for determining which programs and services in addition to those

currently administered by DEL, CA and JR and the Office of Juvenile Justice will be housed in the new department and which will stay within their current departments and administrations.

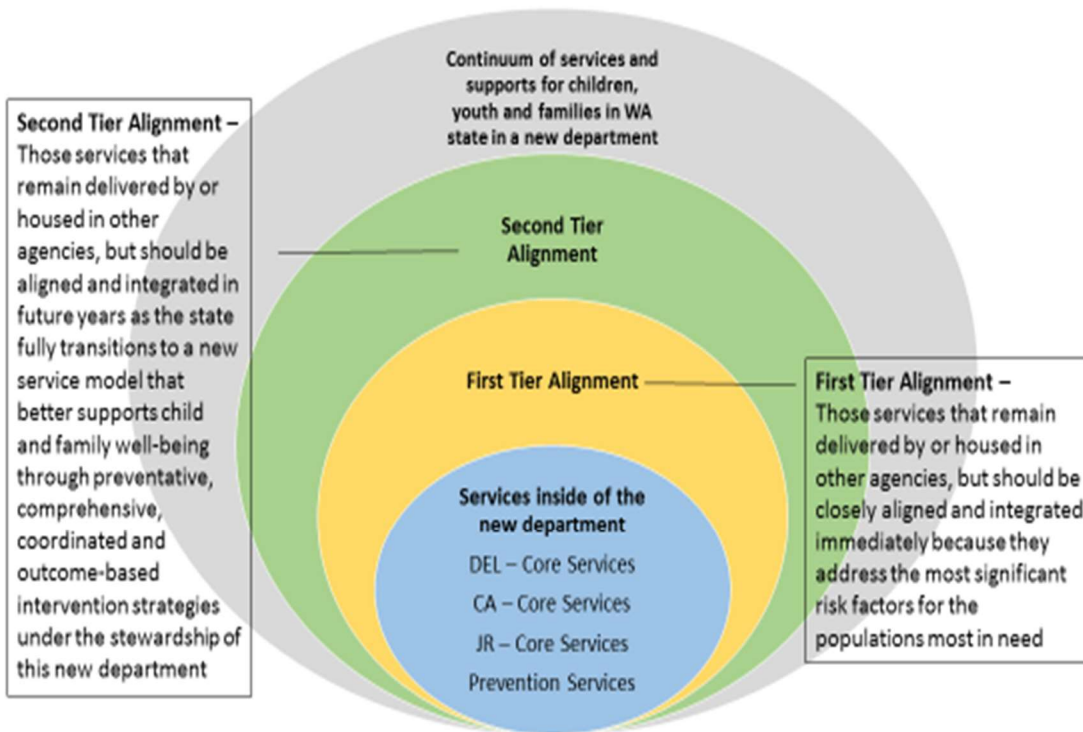
The new department should be a hub for prevention and early intervention. However, not all prevention programs should move to the new agency. The commission recommends aligning, but not including, programs and services that meet the criteria for inclusion, but that should remain in a different agency because there is a strong policy, cost or administrative reason for the service to be integrated in a different manner. (See Figure 5 on the following page.)

In pursuing better alignment and integration, the new department should complement other public systems, particularly the effective work done by public health, as well as HCA, OSPI and others. It is important not to disrupt strong systems, but instead focus on the alignment and integration strategy to support working toward a seamless experience for families.

In considering the alignment work, the new agency should pay special attention to ensuring that services to support multisystem-involved children and youth are effective and accessible.

For more detail, see Appendix E: Considerations for Inclusion or Immediate Alignment and Integration.

Figure 5. Approach to Alignment and Integration



4. Using the BRC’s Alignment and Integration Framework, mandate an aligned and integrated orientation across state agencies and community-based agencies funded by the state serving children, youth and families.

Children, youth and families should have a seamless experience when interacting with the state. Once programs and services have been analyzed for where they should be positioned, either within the new department or where they currently are housed, the process of aligning must be clearly defined and actionable for both the new department and all agencies and tribes. Examples below describe how this alignment and integration approach will result in improvements to the ways in which state and community-based agencies work together to promote a better service experience for children and families. (See Appendix G for detailed framework.)

- ❖ Be clear across departments about how departments align, support and work in service of DCYF so that all are achieving the same outcomes across agencies, using the same data, measuring progress in the same way, making systems work in a cohesive and coherent way, and reducing fragmentation and complexity.

- ❖ Set contract standards across the aligned agencies for outcomes, prevention, evaluation and population.
- ❖ Partner with schools; school continuity is critical. Schools are the common denominator where every child and youth is touched by a system.
- ❖ Partner with juvenile and family courts. Youth who are truant, in need of services or at-risk are referred to county-based juvenile courts, and those in the child welfare system have court involvement as well.
- ❖ Maximize the collective impact of the state as a whole, and tie results to that collective impact.

5. Create a data-focused environment in which all partners are clear that the state can only achieve this vision if there is shared, real-time data that is accessible to everyone interacting with the family, child and youth, at the time of the interaction, to know what a family needs and which services would be effective.

A robust data and technology capability is fundamental to improving outcomes for children, youth and families. Recommendations include the following:

- ❖ Develop a daily dashboard for DCYF and other child- and youth-serving agencies.
- ❖ Create an integrated report on outcomes each year to the Governor and Legislature from DCYF and the aligned agencies for accountability purposes.
- ❖ Include the following technology investments:
 - **FamLink upgrade.** This is the core database of at-risk children and youth; its interface is used by caseworkers, licensors and most employees at CA. It includes all information about children, youth, adults and families who have become involved, even tangentially, with CA.
 - **New payment system** to pay foster homes, child care providers and other vendors of services to children, youth and families. Both CA and DEL use the Social Services Payment System (SSPS), a 40-year-old program written in COBOL and running on a mainframe. The new program would be a more modern design running on a PC server back-end that is much cheaper to run and faster.
 - **Identity Management.** Existing program systems will need updates over a short time horizon to implement identity management using the Office of the Chief Information Officer’s “master data management” strategy. This is necessary to coordinate service delivery in real time for at-risk children and youth.

- **DEL's switch to Salesforce.com** for an upgrade to licensing staff support. More work remains to analyze the impact of this change. Licensing foster homes is a similar process that is currently handled by FamLink and we will need to consider carefully the direction going forward.
- **A few additional IT systems** that DEL does not have and DSHS needs to retain (background check, cost allocation tool, positive time capture for employees, recovery account tracker, etc.).
- ❖ Address the need for data-sharing agreements, balancing privacy and effectiveness to maximize the value of this approach.
- ❖ The move of JR and the Office of Juvenile Justice has not been analyzed in the same depth as the move of CA. There may be unique back-end considerations that will need to be addressed in the 2019–21 budget cycle.

6. **Develop a Children, Youth and Families budget for both presentation and decision-making.**

- ❖ Develop an approach to identify the collective investment and impact of state spending; this should be seen as a portion of the state's total spending that is being spent on specific services (percentage of total expenditure).
- ❖ Identify gaps in critical services and the resources needed to ensure equitable access across the state.
- ❖ Promote transparency for policymakers and the public (presentation budget).
- ❖ Align how dollars are spent with the practice model to which we aspire.
- ❖ Generate more flexibility — children and youth do not currently neatly fit the categories allowed.
- ❖ Identify opportunities for blending funding.
- ❖ Be more informed about trade-off decisions regarding limited resources.
- ❖ Provide possible ways for the dollars to follow the child or youth across systems.
- ❖ Develop more ways to incentivize diversion or other goals as is done in juvenile justice, where counties are rewarded for keeping youth in their own communities.
- ❖ Develop ways to align criteria for/streamline eligibility and access.
- ❖ Develop funding that is targeted, tailored and timely to address unique needs of adolescents.
- ❖ Promote ways to tie savings from more effective, earlier interventions back into services to better meet existing needs.

7. Direct the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) and the Washington State Center for Court Research (WSCCR) to identify additional research-based and promising programs.

The commission did not have enough time to analyze specific programmatic approaches to achieving the vision of the new agency. In creating a new agency, the state has the opportunity to redesign the types of programs it offers to families and to identify the most effective programs for youth who are served, including those implemented in partnership with counties, courts and school districts. That work should be informed by more research, learning from what other jurisdictions have tried. Identifying which programs achieve the best outcomes, which are most cost-effective, and which offer the most innovative approaches is key. WSIPP and WSCCR regularly conduct research in child welfare and juvenile justice and should be engaged to help provide recommendations regarding program array, based on effectiveness.

8. Fiscal Considerations

Addressing Incremental Costs

The process of creating a new state agency and moving major components of DSHS is a complicated endeavor. The state learned, through the creation of DEL and from experiences in other states, that creating a new state agency necessarily includes sufficient “back office” — human resources, contract management, information technology, budget staff, etc.

The commission began with the assumption that direct program funding for programs moving from DSHS to the new agency would move along with these functions. As such, these represent a shift in resources without incremental costs.

However, the commission also recognizes that resources within DSHS are shared across administrations and that moving CA, JR and Office of Juvenile Justice Programs will require shifting those shared administrative resources to the new agency.

Therefore, the commission recommends a range of “back office” or “enterprise” staff be provided to the new agency. This range is based on a preliminary analysis of spending within the larger DSHS administration dedicated to CA and JR business. Analysis from the Fiscal Work Group indicates that between 26 FTE and 39 FTE should be dedicated to the new agency to support the move of CA and 8 FTE for the JR move. These staff are in

addition to those already included in the CA and JR program budgets. This equates to between \$5.8 million and \$8.2 million, annually. (See Appendix F.)

In addition, funding should be provided, beginning in fiscal year 2017 and prior to the official transfer of programs, to support hiring the leadership of the new agency and director of the Office of Innovation and Alignment. Specific funding for at least three leadership positions, as well as contracted support to help manage agency transition, also should be provided.

Finally, the commission recommends that, after statutory creation of the new agency, the OFM convene a follow-up process to further refine the estimates provided in this report. OFM should be tasked with making specific budget recommendations to the Governor around the need for additional “back office” staff, for both DSHS and DCYF, prior to the 2018 supplemental budget session.

It is estimated that the cost of creating the new department in fiscal year 2018 will be between \$7 million and \$9.4 million. Based on the information provided in Appendix F, the estimated cost for fiscal year 2019 is between \$6.5 million and \$8.9 million, subject to adjustment by OFM in the 2019 supplemental budget based on the analysis cited above.

Technology Costs

In addition to the staff included in the above estimates, the Information Technology Work Group has identified a number of areas where existing information systems will be impacted by the organizational change and where existing systems need to be upgraded or enhanced to meet the needs of the new department. The areas of potential need include the following:

- ❖ Predictive analytics or a robust data analytic capacity to ensure program outcomes with the most efficient use of resources.
- ❖ Systems to support front-end operations, including eligibility determination, enrollment support and programmatic information, identity management across programs, provider management, billing and payment, and human resources and internal operations.
- ❖ Systems to support back-end operations, including travel, facility management, public records tracking and document management.

The commission's IT Work Group identified systems that will be impacted by the creation of the new department, and it has begun analysis of the upgrades and enhancements needed. In some cases, the needed system improvements are already part of current technology planning within DSHS and DEL. In some cases, the creation of the new entity will require new technology support. The short-term and long-term costs associated with these systems will be a key part of the transition to the new department.

It is important to note that there are potential federal matching funds available for some of the system costs. Enhancement of eligibility systems can potentially access 90 percent federal funding through a waiver of cost allocation rules that is effective through 2018. In addition, modification of child welfare systems to meet the new Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System regulations can be funded at 50 percent federal match.

The total cost of additional IT budget needs, over and above the budget requests already submitted by DEL and CA for IT upgrades related to their ongoing operations, cannot be estimated until further analysis is conducted by the new department and OFM.

9. Dedicate time and resources to assessing and addressing key issue areas around leadership, practice, infrastructure and agency culture to optimize the transition of CA, DEL and JR into this new department.

- ❖ **Recommendation 9a – Identify and appoint a secretary who will be responsible for the design, implementation and mobilization of this new department within the transition timeframe.** This leader and/or leadership team should be visionary, collaborative, adaptive and skilled in change management to promote a mission-driven approach to building the new department. Outreach to the existing workforce to understand current issues and opportunities will be a primary task. This leader and/or leadership team should partner with local public health systems, workforce, providers and community-based organizations to change community norms to support healthy childhood development. This leader and/or leadership team should prioritize promoting equity; attend to racial and other biases in culture, policy and practices; and further the formal tribal consultation process.

- ❖ **Recommendation 9b – Form a transition team within the Governor’s office to plan and oversee the transition process, until such time as the secretary is appointed. The secretary will then lead the transition team, and continue to plan and oversee the transition process. This process should take between nine months and one year before children, youth and families are fully served by the new department. Start the work of the Office of Innovation and Alignment at the time the transition team is formed.** Making such a significant shift in bringing CA, DEL and JR together in a new department and integrating the other priority elements of prevention and alignment across agencies will take time. A deliberate process is needed to make a smooth and effective shift to this new department.

- ❖ **Recommendation 9c – Within the first three months of the transition period, have an internal expert or external third-party expert complete an outcomes analysis for both CA and DEL, to identify positive and negative trends and opportunities for improvement during the transition.** With the collection and analysis of data being a priority across state agencies, it will be important to integrate the analysis of what is working and what could be improved around outcomes as the transition process moves forward. To simply put CA and DEL into a new structure without assessing what could be proactively addressed, corrected and improved before beginning to function in this new structure would be a significant missed opportunity. An outcome analysis is critical. Recent analyses could be leveraged, but it would be important to have time, resources and attention on integrating this type of review during the transition period. With the transition of JR occurring later on in the new department’s development, there should be a similar analysis for JR as part that transition.

- ❖ **Recommendation 9d – During the transition period, address personnel and workforce infrastructure issues that could impact staff during the transition, including but not limited to developing aligned job classifications for the workforce of the new department, aligning salary to those job classifications, identifying and integrating a manageable caseload into the practice approach, aligning regions, and creating a staffing structure and workforce trained to carry out the new department’s mission.** Stakeholder input emphasized the need to create manageable caseloads, retain staff, promote consistent case practice across the state, and address any compensation or other issues that stand in the way of maintaining a quality workforce to work with children, youth and families. It will be

important to address all personnel and workforce infrastructure issues in the transition period in order to retain staff, promote staff morale and create a shared vision and commitment. As highlighted earlier in the report, child welfare caseloads are too high, which is impacting best practice and worker turnover. In addition, in DSHS, CA's job classifications and salary schedules previously had to align with other DSHS administrations, and they were not always a consistent fit. Having DEL and CA within the same department will support creating optimal job classification and salary structures that align with the specific work of this new department and its focus on children, youth and families.

❖ **Recommendation 9e – Plan for the data transition. To effectively accomplish their missions, both DEL and CA have immediate information technology needs that have been outlined in their budget requests to the Governor.**

The IT needs of the new department will require a detailed transition plan and budget analysis that will be implemented over time. Functions that support both agency operations and critical provider and consumer activities will need to be maintained while new and enhanced systems are implemented to provide more effective service and support workforce efficiency. Key considerations include the following:

- The transition team should convene a data analytics team to assess and curate available data and develop proposed organizational and program metrics.
- Data should not be limited only to service recipients or programs within the department.
- Data should be longitudinal and population based.
- Population-level outcomes should be tracked regardless of agency of record.
- Data analytics, program evaluation and quality assurance processes should be collaborative and objective, with outside participation required.
- De-identified data should be widely available to policymakers across departments and researchers in universities.

❖ **Recommendation 9f – Complete a racial equity impact analysis to understand how distinct racial and ethnic groups will be impacted by this transition**

(see for example, Race Forward's toolkit: <https://www.raceforward.org/practice/tools/racial-equity-impact-assessment-toolkit> and the Race Equity Analysis Tool available from the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee:

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CA/acw/documents/RaceEquityAnalysisTool.pdf>). Aligned with the proposed outcome analysis discussed earlier, a racial

equity impact analysis will identify any issue areas that contribute to racial disproportionality or disparities so that they can be addressed to prevent those practices or policies from being transitioned into the new department. This analysis offers a proactive approach to addressing issues that may have surfaced previously but have not been addressed in prior efforts. The formation of the new department can provide an opportunity to prioritize these practice and policy issues, and to leverage the work and insight of existing resources such as the Washington State Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee. In addition, the use of this type of analysis should be a part of how DCYF operates, and this type of analysis should be developed to address other equity concerns, such as issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity.

- ❖ **Recommendation 9g – Activate an advisory body or multiple bodies that include consumers, providers, tribal representatives, communities of color, parent allies, union representatives and other stakeholders to inform the transition and ensure that transition and implementation issues are identified and addressed prior to the new department beginning to serve children, youth and families.** Stakeholders consistently expressed an interest in being engaged early and often around this transition. Also, key informants who have made a similar shift in other parts of the country frequently noted that engaging stakeholders as advisors through the process in either existing or newly formed advisory bodies was helpful to cultivate trust and a shared perspective around the value of the transition.

- ❖ **Recommendation 9h – During the transition period, in alignment with Indian policy in Washington, the transition team should conduct a formal consultation process with tribes to address all relevant issues associated with the practice, coordination and administrative considerations of the state-tribal relationships.** This transition must be aligned with existing policies in the state around state-tribal agreements, particularly because each tribe in the state has an individualized agreement with both CA and DEL. To support that, tribal leaders engaged in a discussion prior to these recommendations being formulated to identify issues for formal consultation and a process for moving forward that will include the following steps:
 - A series of round table meetings will be convened at least once a month starting in early December 2016.
 - The meetings will be held in person or via video conference.

- Meeting materials will be sent out at least one week in advance.
 - This process will help frame the conversations for the formal consultation process, which is separate and distinct.
- ❖ **Recommendation 9j – During the transition period, inform all departments and their respective administrations about the formation of DCYF by familiarizing leadership with the focus and functions of the new department, preparing policy instructions and tools specifically around the alignment and integration functions of DCYF, and developing a communication and implementation approach that informs internal and external stakeholders about the transition and its implications.** With the alignment and integration expectations of this transition for all state agencies and their respective administrations, being clear both at the leadership level and practice level about defining and demonstrating this aligned and integrated way of working will be critical. Providing information, structure and related communication tools should be a priority for the transition team.
- ❖ **Recommendation 9k – Engage court personnel (judges, court administrators, lawyers, court-appointed special advocates [CASAs], guardians ad litem, and other court staff) through training, targeted communication, and inclusion in activities and information exchanges that will inform, motivate and promote optimal collaboration aligned with the new department’s vision.** Court personnel surveyed offered varied insights about how to effectively address the needs of children, youth and families, much of which related to perceptions about families meeting or not meeting expectations and the decision-making process around reunification and termination of parental rights. Court personnel are a critical part of the decision-making process for children, youth and families moving through the dependency and delinquency systems. Engagement and strong partnership with court personnel will be important to prioritize and cultivate in the transition process and to continue once the new department starts officially serving children, youth and families, to promote a shared philosophy and approach to working in a more aligned and integrated way.
- ❖ **Recommendation 9l – The transition team and new department leadership should develop a set of measureable benchmarks for both process and child, youth and family outcomes that will provide clear accountability.**

In subsequent planning, the department should develop clear benchmarks for the outcomes described in Recommendation 1. In other words, how do we know children, youth and families are doing better, based on this work? These measures can build on what state agencies are currently measuring and targeted goals associated with those measures, as well as aligning with the guiding principles (see Figure 6). In addition, process measures related to the formation of the new department should be put in place to conduct the transition and implementation processes effectively.

Figure 6: Sample Measures Aligned with Commission Guiding Principles

Guiding Principle	Sample Measure
1. Focus on prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a clear set of ultimate prevention outcomes to achieve (examples: reduce the number of children and youth in the foster care system, reduce referrals to the child welfare system, reduce ACEs, health prevention data points) • Identify key educational outcomes including kindergarten readiness, high school graduation, and measures regarding noncognitive skills such as critical thinking, problem solving and social/emotional learning.
2. Focus on promoting child, youth and family well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to, utilization of and results of supports for parents to increase their knowledge, parenting skills and capacity (parental developmental stages)
3. Focus on an optimal developmental pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment to align children’s and youth’s developmental needs and services and the corresponding result(s)
4. Prioritize children, youth and families furthest from opportunity and those at greatest risk for negative outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency and success of engaging children and families who may not have accessed social services in the past, but who have clearly definable needs that supports and services could address • Frequency of involvement of children, youth and families across agencies with an outcome of reduced involvement over time due to meeting child, youth and family needs effectively

Guiding Principle	Sample Measure
5. Ensure services are science based, outcome-driven, data-informed and collaborative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of strategies to further an informed use of data, including identifying comparison group(s) to analyze improvements and opportunities and using predictive data to connect children, youth and families with needed supports
6. Improve the connections among children, youth, families and communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidence of children, youth and families interacting with social service systems • Use of community-based supports by children, youth and families without having to formally engage social service systems • Incidence of multigenerational substance abuse, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, ACEs, and other challenges that supports and services can impact
7. Address racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mechanisms are created that support equity/proportionality around access and receipt of services • Population-specific or culturally specific needs and norms are identified, understood and addressed to promote equitable access and outcomes
8. Ensure programs and services are effective and accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of data dashboards and CQI processes, and their corresponding results
9. Develop a skilled and supported workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff retention • Improved outcomes for children, youth and families • Consumer satisfaction
10. Provide leadership and funding to achieve the mission and vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved outcomes for children, youth and families • Development of an integrated children, youth and families budget • Completion of work plan priorities • Implementation of the recommendations of the commission

Appendix A: Executive Order 16-03

Transforming Services for Children and Families in Washington State February 18, 2016

WHEREAS, creating a separate children and families department has the potential to promote greater accountability, heighten the visibility of children’s issues, and reduce barriers to improving service and outcomes for children and families; and

WHEREAS, an increasing number of jurisdictions, including Indiana, New Jersey, New York City, Tennessee, Georgia, and Wisconsin, have created separate children’s departments to improve outcomes; and

WHEREAS, data from other states indicates that separate departments correlate with necessary levels of authority, enhanced visibility for children’s issues, ease in enacting changes and general system improvements, as well as improved outcomes; and

WHEREAS, in Washington, the concept of a separate children and families department has been introduced legislatively and studied extensively; and

WHEREAS, making large, structural changes to state government takes careful planning and consideration of fiscal costs, impacts on staff, goals of programmatic reform, impacts on the ongoing work performed by the existing department, performance indicators, and timeframes; and

WHEREAS, organizational change, alone, does not improve outcomes. Research indicates that effective leadership, adequate financial resources, and distribution of authority in the organization are all vital to achieving stated goals.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Inslee, Governor of the state of Washington, hereby create the Washington State Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families as follows:

1. The Commission shall consist of 16 members appointed as follows:
 - a. The Speaker of the Washington State House of Representatives may appoint two members, one from the majority caucus and one from the minority caucus;
 - b. The President of the Washington State Senate may appoint two members, one from the majority caucus and one from the minority caucus;
 - c. The Governor of Washington shall appoint the following:
 - i. A representative of the Office of the Governor;
 - ii. The Secretary of the Department of Social and Health Services or the Secretary’s designee;
 - iii. The Assistant Secretary of the Children’s Administration within the Department of Social and Health Services;
 - iv. The Director of the Department of Early Learning or the Director’s designee;
 - v. A superior court judge with experience in family law;
 - vi. A juvenile court administrator;
 - vii. The Director of the Office of the Family and Children’s Ombudsman or designee;

- viii. A representative from the Washington Federation of State Employees;
 - ix. Two members representing tribal governments;
 - x. One subject matter expert on issues related to improving outcomes for children and families involved in the child welfare system; and
 - xi. One subject matter expert on issues related to economic welfare of children and families involved in the child welfare system.
2. All members shall serve at the pleasure of their appointing authority. The co-chairs of the Taskforce shall be a member of the Legislature, as selected by the legislative members, and the Governor's designee. The co-chairs shall develop a work plan, set the agenda, and provide leadership and direction for the Taskforce.
 3. A quorum for the Taskforce meetings shall consist of a majority of the members. The Commission shall make recommendations on an affirmative vote of the majority of its members.
 4. The Commission shall recommend the following:
 - a. A clear mission and vision for the new organization;
 - b. New organizational structure, including recommendations on which agencies, administrations, commissions, or other functions of state government should be included within the new Children's Department;
 - c. Estimated costs for the reorganization – including IT and capital;
 - d. A clear process for managing the reorganization, including the involvement of regional management and case-carrying staff;
 - e. Measurable benchmarks by which the effectiveness of the new children and families department would be assessed.
 5. In developing its recommendations, the Commission may form workgroups and consult with experts in organizational restructuring. Workgroups should be inclusive of perspectives of community-based providers, youth, foster and adoptive parents, and parent allies.
 6. The Commission shall produce a written report of its recommendation no later than November 1, 2016.
 7. The Department of Social and Health Services, the Department of Early Learning, and the Governor's Office of Financial Management shall provide staff support for the Commission.
 8. If the Commission requires assistance or non-privileged data from any other state agency, board, or commission, then such agency, board, or commission shall provide assistance or data to the Commission upon request.

Appendix B: Commission Members

Co-Chairs

Representative Ruth Kagi (Legislative Appointee) represents the 32nd District, which includes North King and South Snohomish County, and chairs the house Early Learning and Human Services Committee.

Judge Anne Levinson (Ret.) (Governor’s Appointee) serves as an advisor for government, nonprofits and foundations.

Commissioners

Lawrence Berger (Economic Issues Expert) is director of the Institute for Research on Poverty and professor and Ph.D. chair in the School of Social Work at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Barbara Carr is the juvenile court administrator for Jefferson County.

Senator Jeannie Darneille (Legislative Appointee) is serving her first term representing the 27th legislative district, which includes the city of Tacoma. Senator Darneille served in the state House of Representatives since 2001.

Patrick Dowd is director of the Washington State Office of the Family and Children’s Ombuds.

Ross Hunter is director of the Washington Department of Early Learning.

Micah Kurtz (Washington Federation of State Employees Representative) serves in King County as a DSHS Child and Family Welfare Services supervisor.

Pat Lashway is acting secretary for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS).

Liz Mueller (Tribal Representative) has served for the past 22 years as the chair of the Indian Policy Advisory Committee to DSHS and the Indian Child Welfare Committee to the Children’s Administration (CA).

Bryan Samuels (Child Welfare Expert) is the executive director of Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Jennifer Strus is the Children’s Administration assistant secretary.

Mel Tonasket (Tribal Representative) is the Vice Chairman of the Colville Business Council, the governing body of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Kitty-Ann van Doorninck serves as a Pierce County Superior Court Judge.

Representative Maureen Walsh (Legislative Appointee) is serving her sixth term representing the 16th Legislative District, which includes all of Columbia and Walla Walla counties and parts of Benton and Franklin Counties.

Senator Judy Warnick (Legislative Appointee) is serving her fourth term representing the 13th District, which encompasses all of Kittitas and Lincoln counties, southern Grant County, and a small part of northern Yakima County.

Appendix C: Speakers, Presenters and Key Informants

The following individuals participated in commission meetings or in key informant interviews:

Janna Bardi, Assistant Secretary, Prevention & Community Health, Washington State Department of Health

Betty Bekemeier, Associate Professor, Health Services, University of Washington

Reggie Bicha, Executive Director, Colorado Department of Human Services

Shay Bilchik, Founder and Director, for Georgetown University's Center for Juvenile Justice Reform

Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W., Commissioner, New Jersey Department of Children and Families

David Bley, Director, Pacific Northwest Initiative, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Rita Cameron Wedding, Ph.D., Professor, Sacramento State University, and national expert on implicit bias

Steve Cohen, Senior Fellow, Center for the Study of Social Policy; Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

Benjamin DeHaan, Executive Director, Partners for Our Children

Susan Dreyfus, President and CEO, Alliance for Strong Families and Communities

Azita Emami, Dean, School of Nursing, University of Washington

Phil Fisher, Ph.D., Professor and Director of Clinical Training, Philip H. Knight Chair, Department of Psychology, University of Oregon

Carol Freeman, Chapter Leader, Tacoma Chapter – The Mockingbird Society

Todd George, Program Director, Childhaven

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Chet Hewitt, President and CEO, The Sierra Health Foundation

Bonnie Hommrich, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Children's Services

Pamela Kestner, Deputy Secretary, Virginia Office of the Secretary of Health and Human Resources

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Shrounda Selivanoff, Member of the Statewide Racial Disproportionality Advisory Committee

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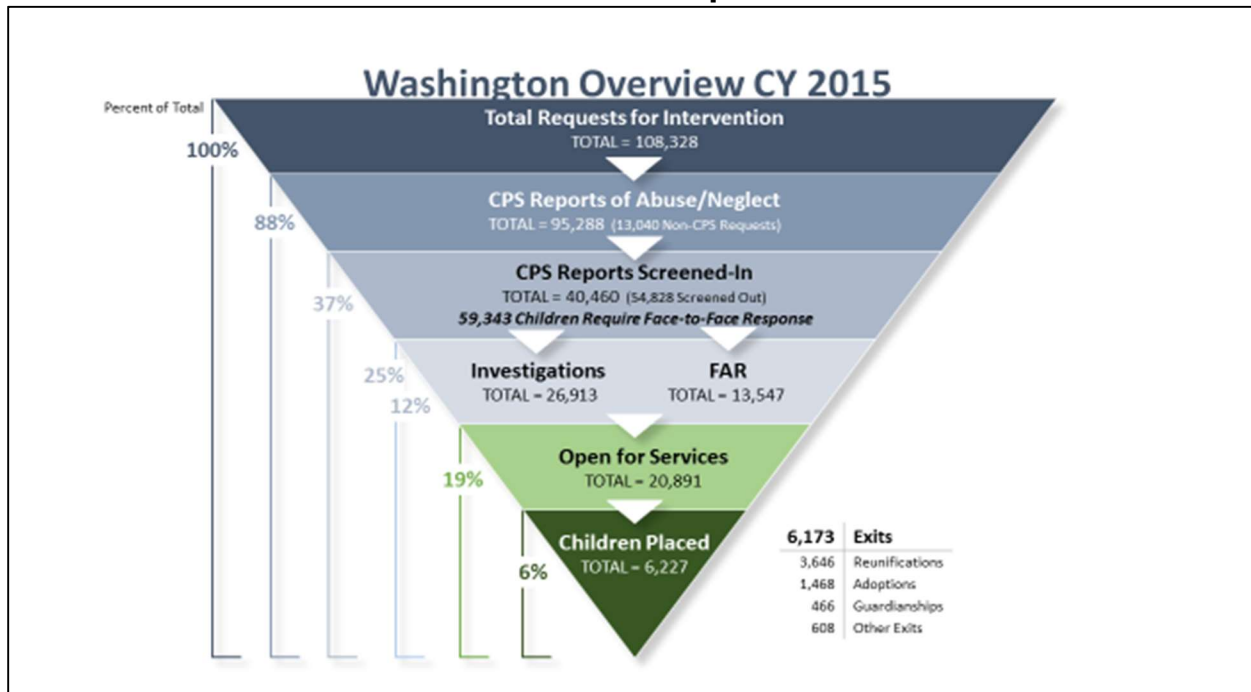
Rayanna Williams, Budget Assistant, Office of Financial Management

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Appendix D: Data Detail

Children’s Administration – Population Served – 2015



Source: Children’s Administration

Shared Services Across DSHS – 2014

Shared Services Across Programs
 AMONG 853,490 CHILDREN/YOUTH AGES 0-17 WHO WERE MEDICALLY ELIGIBLE IN SFY 2014
 TOTAL STATE POPULATION AGES 0-17 = 1,591,184

	Economic Services Administration	ESA TANF	ESA Working Connection Childcare	Children’s Administration Any Service	CA Foster Care Services	Juvenile Rehabilitation Services	Developmental Disability Services	HCA Medical Coverage	Behavioral Health Treatment Need
Economic Services Administration	720,142	123,168	82,392	82,170	10,599	1,481	10,470	588,554	111,080
ESA TANF	123,168	123,168	25,283	27,203	4,737	296	1,765	120,651	24,316
ESA Working Connection Childcare	82,392	25,283	82,392	11,730	690	---	1,463	79,133	11,644
Children’s Administration Any Service	82,170	27,203	11,730	111,006	11,682	827	3,661	91,789	35,196
CA Foster Care Services	10,599	4,737	690	11,682	11,682	114	969	11,265	6,311
Juvenile Rehabilitation Services	1,481	296	---	827	114	2,231	9	1,681	1,652
Developmental Disability Services	10,470	1,765	1,463	3,661	969	9	23,222	14,755	4,894
HCA Medical Coverage	588,554	120,651	79,133	91,789	11,265	1,681	14,755	853,490	137,609
Behavioral Health Treatment Need	111,080	24,316	11,644	35,196	6,311	1,652	4,894	137,609	143,276

DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, May 2018

Source: DSHS – RDA

Resources:

- ❖ 2016 Kids County Profile – http://www.aecf.org/m/databook/2016KC_profiles_WA.pdf
- ❖ KIDS COUNT Washington – <http://kidscountwa.org/state-of-washingtons-kids-2016/>
- ❖ Results Washington – <https://data.results.wa.gov/>
- ❖ WaKIDS – <http://www.k12.wa.us/WaKIDS/Data/WaKIDS-2015-data-summary.pdf>
- ❖ Homeless Student Data –
<http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2015documents/HomelessStudentsJan2015.pdf>
- ❖ Transforming School Discipline –
http://media.wix.com/ugd/4569ed_22a38ac956c744e4a5cd9b81eeeefb4c.pdf
- ❖ Braam Dashboard (Sept 2016)
<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CA/acw/documents/braam0916Perdashboard.pdf>
- ❖ Graduation and Dropout Statistics Annual Report, March 2016 –
<http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin/pubdocs/GradDropout/14-15/2014-15GraduationDropoutStatisticsAnnualReport.pdf>
- ❖ Prevalence and Characteristics of Multi-System Youth in Washington State –
http://www.courts.wa.gov/wscrr/docs/MultiSystemYouthInWA_Final.pdf
- ❖ DSHS/CA/RDA Research and Resources (not an exhaustive list) –
 - <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-7-106.pdf>
 - <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/SESA/rda/documents/research-11-178.pdf>
 - <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/CA/acw/documents/RacialDisproLegislativeReport2016.pdf>

Appendix E: Considerations for Inclusion or Immediate Alignment/Integration

- ❖ Ensure that children, youth and families of all races, ethnicities and cultures have equitable developmental opportunities and outcomes.
- ❖ Ensure there is adherence to American Indian 7.01 Policy and Memoranda of Agreements with Tribal Governments.
- ❖ Consider the cost/benefit of inclusion.
- ❖ Consider whether inclusion negatively impacts linkages between other programs (e.g., core services of large agencies providing services to broad groups of the population; basic education in OSPI; preventative health services in DOH).
- ❖ Consider whether inclusion provides a benefit because there is a shared client pool or a logical cluster of services.
- ❖ Maximize effective use of changes in technology and other tools that enhance the cost effectiveness of the new model of providing services by integrating, coordinating or aligning services in ways that don't require them to be moved under the same roof in order to achieve the intended outcomes.
- ❖ Consider the optimal size and span of control for the new agency to accomplish its vision and mission.
- ❖ Consider whether inclusion or alignment will provide the opportunity to enhance partnerships, alignment and coordination with providers delivering services on behalf of the state; at the community level; and with tribes, local governments and research institutions.
- ❖ Consider whether inclusion or alignment can offer the opportunity to streamline eligibility and enrollment criteria, processes and access for those in the priority population.
- ❖ Consider whether inclusion or alignment can help to provide real-time data about the child, youth and family and make the appropriate portfolio of services available to appropriate providers of services or case managers at the time when it would be most beneficial.

Appendix F: Estimated Costs

Program Funds 2017-19 Biennium														
	SFY 2018				SFY 2019				Biennium					
	FTE	GF-S	Other	Total	FTE	GF-S	Other	Total	FTE	Total				
Current Appropriations														
Children's Admin.	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	2,583	\$ 337,193,000	\$ 263,557,000	\$ 600,750,000	2,583	\$ 600,750,000
Juvenile Rehab. Admin	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -
Dept. of Early Learning	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	282	\$ 100,541,000	-	\$ 209,714,000	\$ 310,255,000	282	\$ 310,255,000	\$ 310,255,000	282	\$ 310,255,000
Subtotal	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	2,865	\$ 437,734,000	-	\$ 473,271,000	\$ 911,005,000	2,865	\$ 911,005,000	\$ 911,005,000	2,865	\$ 911,005,000
Additional Funding														
DEL- Innovation Office	3	\$ 450,000	-	\$ 450,000	3	\$ 450,000	-	\$ 450,000	\$ 450,000	3	\$ 900,000	\$ 900,000	3	\$ 900,000
OFM -Contracts	-	\$ 500,000	-	\$ 500,000	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	-	\$ 500,000
OFM- Change Management	-	\$ 250,000	-	\$ 250,000	-	\$ 250,000	-	\$ 250,000	\$ 250,000	-	\$ 500,000	\$ 500,000	-	\$ 500,000
Subtotal	3	\$ 1,200,000	-	\$ 1,200,000	3	\$ 700,000	-	\$ 700,000	\$ 700,000	3	\$ 1,900,000	\$ 1,900,000	3	\$ 1,900,000
TOTAL	3	1,200,000	-	1,200,000	2,868	438,434,000	473,271,000	911,705,000	911,705,000	2,871	\$ 912,905,000	\$ 912,905,000	2,871	\$ 912,905,000

Program Funds 2019-21 Biennium														
	SFY 2020				SFY 2021				Biennium					
	FTE	GF-S	Other	Total	FTE	GF-S	Other	Total	FTE	Total				
Current Appropriations														
Children's Admin.	2,583	\$ 337,193,000	-	\$ 263,557,000	-	\$ 600,750,000	2,583	\$ 337,193,000	-	\$ 263,557,000	-	\$ 600,750,000	2,583	\$ 1,201,500,000
Juvenile Rehab. Admin	767	\$ 89,634,000	-	\$ 4,229,000	-	\$ 93,863,000	767	\$ 89,634,000	-	\$ 4,229,000	-	\$ 93,863,000	767	\$ 187,726,000
Dept. of Early Learning	282	\$ 100,541,000	-	\$ 209,714,000	-	\$ 310,255,000	282	\$ 100,541,000	-	\$ 209,714,000	-	\$ 310,255,000	282	\$ 620,510,000
Subtotal	3,632	527,368,000	477,500,000	1,004,868,000	3,632	527,368,000	477,500,000	1,004,868,000	1,004,868,000	3,632	\$ 2,009,736,000	\$ 2,009,736,000	3,632	\$ 2,009,736,000
Additional Funding														
DEL- Innovation Office	3	\$ 450,000	-	\$ 450,000	3	\$ 450,000	-	\$ 450,000	\$ 450,000	3	\$ 900,000	\$ 900,000	3	\$ 900,000
OFM -Contracts	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
OFM- Change Management	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -	\$ -	-	\$ -
Subtotal	3	450,000	-	450,000	3	450,000	-	450,000	450,000	3	\$ 900,000	\$ 900,000	3	\$ 900,000
TOTAL	3,635	527,818,000	477,500,000	1,005,318,000	3,635	527,818,000	477,500,000	1,005,318,000	1,005,318,000	3,635	\$ 2,010,636,000	\$ 2,010,636,000	3,635	\$ 2,010,636,000

Administration (DSHS 110)								
	SFY 2018		SFY 2019		SFY 2020		SFY 2021	
	FTE	Total	FTE	Total	FTE	Total	FTE	Total
Current Appropriations								
Children's Admin.	-	-	27	2,700,000	27	\$ 2,700,000	27	\$ 2,700,000
Juvenile Rehab. Admin	-	-	-	-	8	\$ 800,000	8	\$ 800,000
TOTAL	-	-	27	2,700,000	35	3,500,000	35	3,500,000

Total Funds				
	2017-19 Biennium		2019-21 Biennium	
	FTE	Total	FTE	Total
Current Appropriations				
Children's Admin.	2,610	\$ 603,450,000	2,610	\$ 1,206,900,000
Juvenile Rehab. Admin	-	\$ -	775	\$ 189,326,000
Dept. of Early Learning	282	\$ 310,255,000	282	\$ 620,510,000
Subtotal	2,892	913,705,000	3,667	2,016,736,000
Additional Funding				
DEL- Innovation Office	3	\$ 900,000	3	\$ 900,000
OFM -Contracts	-	\$ 500,000	-	\$ -
OFM- Change Management	-	\$ 500,000	-	\$ -
Subtotal	3	1,900,000	3	900,000
TOTAL	2,895	915,605,000	3,670	2,017,636,000

Appendix G: Alignment and Integration Framework

Background

The Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families (BRC), as part of its work to design a new department focused on serving children, youth and families, has prioritized the importance of alignment and integration of services, policies and practices across all state-run and state-funded systems working with children, youth and families in order for the state to be able to better achieve important outcomes related to child, youth and family well-being.¹ The BRC Alignment Work Group met on Aug. 9, 2016, and decided that alignment and coordinated service delivery is a priority regardless of the organizational structure that the BRC recommends for the new department. As a result, the Work Group discussed and identified the following during the Aug. 9th and subsequent meetings (Aug. 24th, Sept. 2nd, and Sept. 8th and Sept. 21st):

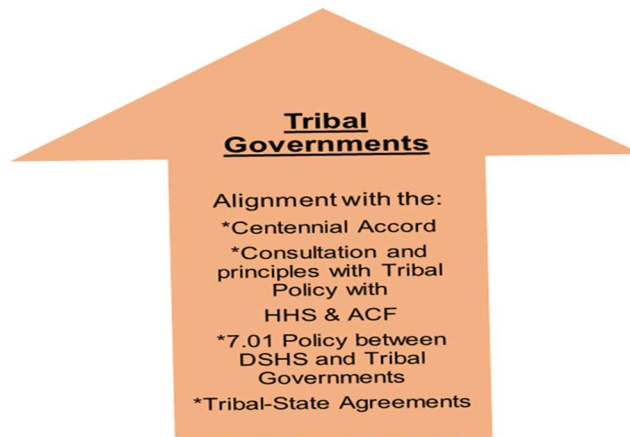
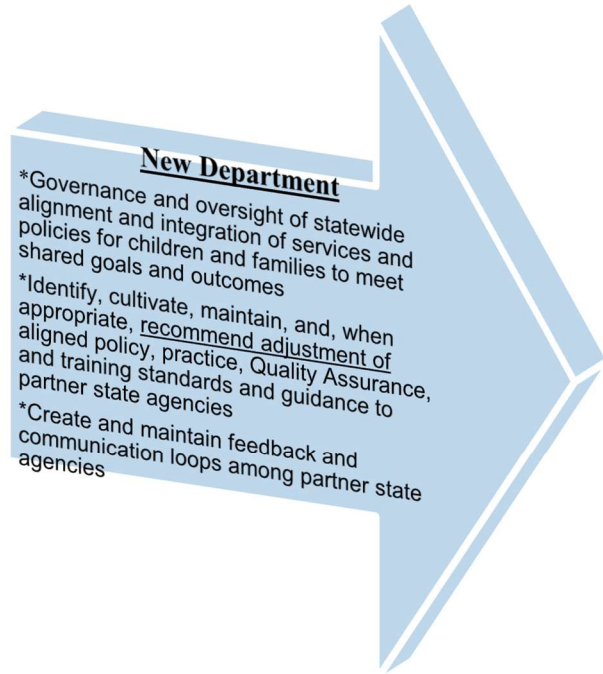
Vision for Alignment and Integration across agencies serving children, youth and families, led by the new department

- Whenever the state is providing services or funding the provision of services to children, youth and families:
 - The service delivery model should be based on a social determinants framework that is focused on prevention and well-being that is:
 - seamlessly coordinated rather than disjointed,
 - research and science-based, with a focus on brain development in children,
 - child development-informed,
 - culturally competent and culturally responsive in structure and practice,
 - recognizing the Sovereignty of Tribal Governments and promoting an understanding of Indian Child Welfare laws and policies,
 - which effectively engages family and elevates family voice and choice, meeting families where they are, and
 - that minimizes system-involvement or reduces the likelihood of additional system-involvement or further harm.
 - For example, this approach could apply to a family seeking economic support, a nutritional program for new parents, a child in the juvenile court system, a parent needing substance abuse or mental health treatment, a referral from a provider for possible abuse and neglect, a family experiencing domestic violence, a foster parent in need of support, a youth experiencing multiple placements or

¹ See, for example - <http://www.childwelfarepolicy.org/maps/state?id=48>
<https://wallethub.com/edu/best-worst-states-underprivileged-children/5403/#main-findings>
<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/>
<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-the2016kidscountdatatbook-2016.pdf>
<http://rightforkids.org/files/8113/4064/8461/FGA-RightForKidsBook-web-single-pages.pdf>

transitioning out of the child welfare or juvenile justice system, or any other way in which a family is interacting with state systems of support.

- There should be a unified data base that promotes aligning, accessing, and activating around data, through the integration of data and data-sharing across agencies and in partnership with the community-based organizations. Each agency or caseworker will have a more holistic picture of what the family, youth or child needs, and be able to identify gaps or services being missed that are appropriate for the family. The necessary policies and practices would be in place to address clients' interests, confidentiality, and consent.
- The contracts and budgets for all programs and services should be aligned in terms of outcome measures, evaluation criteria, risk factors, reporting, training and, to the extent possible, eligibility criteria and populations to be served.
- Agency staff in the new department should support families seeking help so they do not have to navigate through complicated systems. Seamless transition to programs should not have to rely on personal relationships of those who have worked in the system for many years, but instead should be part of organizational training and mentoring for all caseworkers and others providing direct services.
- Support should occur at the earliest possible juncture with immediacy, not after a crisis has occurred. Services should be accessible, available, timely and provided equitably, without disparity based on geography, income or demographic factors. Providing services and supports with finite resources, those at highest risk of poor outcomes should be prioritized.
- The new department should provide a single point of accountability (a 'first among equals'), working in collaboration with the other agency directors, with clear governance structures, performance measures, transparency in reporting to the Governor, Legislature and public, with accountability to reform processes, break down silos, expectations, and meet shared outcomes.
- The new department is the brain trust for innovation, key research, and addressing emerging needs.
- There should be a unified children, youth and family budget and service portfolio for the state that is not agency by agency but instead provides clarity and accountability in meeting this unified set of outcomes.
- The governance of this alignment and integration approach is one that supports alignment of decision-making and practice to address shared goals for our respective systems and our shared clients, where an authentic exchange and action occur to achieve the desired outcome for children, youth and families.
- The orientation of all agencies linked through this alignment and integration framework would be no opting out in how these agencies work together to serve children, youth and families; distinctions in mandates and/or missions do not negate or dilute the obligation to align and integrate in this new environment.



Framework

**Note: Implementation costs will be variable so “may” and “will” are used in the “Any potential costs” column because there are some unknowns around initial costs of making this shift, with the expectation that some would not become sustained costs and there could be savings as a result of improved client experience and outcomes*

Domain	Alignment/Integration Strategies	Any potential costs (specify)
Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment work group/BRC proposes a governance structure to support decision-making and initial formation of governing body and/or governance lead that includes identifying an approach to support Tribal governance (<i>per the work group’s discussions, would want to avoid a traditional sub-cabinet or children’s cabinet structure</i>) • Once new department is formed or forming, new department leadership activates the governance structure from the beginning of the formation of the new department 	For the new department, there may/will be staffing costs related to governance structure and any regular administrative expenses for managing/coordinating governance process for an optimal approach
Policy Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the BRC Guiding Principles, Alignment work group/BRC analyzes missions of partner state agencies to promote first tier of alignment/ integration policy considerations and programs that provide prevention and intervention services to children, youth and families. • Alignment work group/BRC make initial recommendations of policy considerations to focus on aligned with the Guiding Principles • Alignment work group will propose criteria to identify which current programs across agencies are included in the new department and which would not be included in the new department and would be prioritized for integration and alignment; initial recommendations can be further reviewed once new department is formed • Alignment work group/BRC make initial recommendations for any staffing within the new department needed to serve the policy development function • Policy development will adhere to Washington State-Tribal Governments’ 7.01 consultation and the Centennial Accord policies • Once new department is formed, new department leadership should assemble leads of partner state agencies to discuss/inform this first tier of policy considerations and develop plan to continue to formulate ongoing policy alignment and integration 	For the new department, there may/will be staffing costs related to policy development to support an optimal approach
Development of Practice Frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned with the BRC Guiding Principles, Alignment work group/BRC makes initial recommendations about a practice framework and focus areas related to alignment and integration across agencies • Practice frame development will align with Washington State-Tribal Governments’ policies and other relevant guidance from the Office of Indian Affairs • Once new department is formed, new department leadership should formulate practice model for alignment/integration, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Practice domains and related behaviors/functions ○ Engaging internal and external supports (i.e., navigators) 	For the new department, there may/will be staffing, technical assistance, and consulting costs related to the development of a practice model to support an optimal approach

Domain	Alignment/Integration Strategies	Any potential costs (specify)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Supervision guidance 	
Staffing Alignment Functions within Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on the BRC Guiding Principles and in consultation with Tribal Governments, Alignment work group/BRC makes initial recommendations around how to optimally address alignment and integration on the partner agency side with staff linkages (if appropriate) 	For the new department and partner state agencies, there may/will be staffing costs associated with having either distinct staff or staff functions focused on alignment priorities
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aligned with the BRC Guiding Principles, Alignment work group/BRC makes initial recommendations about training related to alignment and integration policies and practices across agencies ● To ensure an understanding of alignment considerations with Tribal Governments, training on the Indian Child Welfare Act, Government to Government Implementation Guidelines, 7.01 consultation, and the Centennial Accord will be included ● Once new department is formed, new department should formulate formal training priorities, approach, and curricula 	For the new department and partner state agencies, there may/will be training and staffing costs associated with having either distinct staff or staff functions
QA/ Monitoring/ Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Based on the BRC Guiding Principles, Alignment work group/BRC makes initial recommendations about QA, monitoring, and partner agency compliance related to alignment and integration across agencies, including tools Q/A, monitoring, and compliance tools in work with tribal children, youth and families (i.e., ICW Review Tool, 7.0 compliance monitoring) ● Once new department is formed, new department should formulate formal QA, monitoring and compliance processes, leaning on the governance structure if appropriate to support decision-making 	For the new department and partner state agencies, there may/will be staffing costs associated with having either distinct staff or staff functions focused around cross-systems QA, monitoring, and compliance

What Alignment and Integration Will Look Like

Scenario	Currently	Aligned and Integrated looks like....	What would be different?*
Mom coming in with a baby to receive WIC	WIC services provided with the potential of linkages to other services as needs present themselves	Proactively assessing for additional needs and providing access and linkage to meet those needs and also identifying if mom is a Native American/member of a Tribe (example – a depression screening and related protocol to offer assistance if the mom needs other supports and services wherever she lives and that she can access immediately and easily)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maternal depression would be identified and addressed early on, preventing serious negative impacts on baby. • Appropriate supports are identified that are accessible, portable, and voluntary • Joint case planning when appropriate with ability to leverage and access partner agency’s case management and data systems to promote a seamless approach to the service experience

Scenario	Currently	Aligned and Integrated looks like....	What would be different?*
Mom receiving substance abuse treatment in newborn’s first year of life	Mom could be receiving substance abuse and mental health treatment currently available	Complementary home visiting services and supports, along with other supports that foster serving the family holistically around concrete supports, addressing other needs associated with well-being, building capacity and skill around the developmental needs of a child in the first year of life, and working with Tribe if mom is a member of a Tribe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing isolation • Providing a more holistic approach to accessible and portable services • Joint case planning when appropriate with ability to leverage and access partner agencies’ case management and data systems to promote a seamless approach to the service experience
A homeless family with a child or youth of any age	If accessing services, this family might be receiving specific supports around housing, economic assistance, and/or addressing other needs, but it may be based on where this family is in the state and what supports are available in that community	Serving this family holistically wherever they are in the state to address basic needs around housing, employment, and economic assistance via services that are accessible, available and portable, along with screening, identifying, and linkages to other needed supports, such as child care for a family experiencing homelessness, with a goal of addressing immediate needs and helping the family stabilize and remain intact. If family members are part of a Tribe, contact Tribe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing isolation • Providing a more holistic approach to accessible and portable services • Meeting both immediate needs and assessing and offering supports to promote child, youth and family well-being • Joint case planning and ability to leverage and appropriately access partner agency’s case management and data systems to promote a seamless approach to the service experience

<p>Family with multiple adversities that is already connected to child welfare or connected to other public system supports</p>	<p>Family being case managed around a case plan with that respective agency and possibly linked/connected to services and supports to address other non-case plan needs, but not necessarily consistently and dependent on the case management and approach to addressing the case plan <u>and</u> other needs that are not a part of the case plan</p>	<p>To serve the family holistically, case management would offer specific supports to ensure the family receives appropriate services to address basic needs, promote child development and well-being, meet the specific needs of that family, and identify if family members are Native American/part of a Tribe and align services and contact Tribe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case management would be holistic and provide access to needed services. • Services would meet both immediate needs and provide supports to promote child, youth and family well-being • Joint case planning when appropriate with ability to leverage and access partner agency’s case management and data systems to promote a seamless approach to the service experience
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**Examples of systems that would be leveraged and accessed to support this alignment and integration include: Benefit Verification System (BVS), the Client Registry, and eJAS.*

Endnotes

ⁱ The commission's work was supported by Andi Smith, Senior Policy Advisor to Gov. Inslee, and a consultant team including Cheryl Blanchette, Leslie Ann Hay, Don Winstead, Cathy Fisher and Jill Rivera Greene.

ⁱⁱ A PowerPoint presentation providing preliminary analysis of focus group and survey findings was presented at the commission's October 11, 2016, meeting and can be viewed on the Governor's website:

http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/documents/BRCCF_20161011_WAVoicesPrelimFindings.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-the2016kidscountdatabook-2016.pdf>

^{iv} Child Trends. (2015). *The developing brain: Implications for youth programs*. Retrieved from

<http://www.childtrends.org/publications/the-developing-brain/>

^v Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (2016). *Applying the science of child development in child welfare systems*. <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

^{vi} Ibid; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2012). *The science of neglect: The persistent absence of responsive care disrupts the developing brain*. Working Paper 12.

<http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>

^{vii} Shonkoff, Jack. Presentation to commission. September 13, 2016.

^{viii} Lucenko, et al. (2012.) *Adverse childhood experiences associated with behavioral health problems in adolescents*. <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/research-and-data-analysis>

^{ix} Ibid

^x National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. *The science of neglect*.

^{xi} Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. *Applying the science of child development in child welfare systems*. p.6.

^{xii} Child Trends. *The developing brain*. p. 2.

^{xiii} Child Welfare Information Gateway, the Children's Bureau. (2015). *Understanding the effects of maltreatment on brain development*, p. 9 https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/brain_development.pdf

^{xiv} Noble, C. (2016, June). *Youth homelessness in Washington: Landscape scan*. Available from A Way Home Washington: http://www.awayhomewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/courtney_youth_final090116.pdf

^{xv} Compared to youth involved only in one system, dual-system youth were more likely to have adult criminal

justice involvement, to be on public welfare, to access health services and to access mental health and substance abuse services. They were two to three times more likely to access three or more service systems within four and eight years of turning 18. In addition, they were less likely to be consistently employed, and they earned less during this time. Culhane, D. P., Metraux, S., and Moreno, M. (2011). *Young adult outcomes of exiting dependent or delinquent care in Los Angeles County*. Los Angeles: County of Los Angeles.

^{xvi} Wiig, J. K. & Tuell, J., with Heldman, J. K. (2013). *Guidebook for juvenile justice & child welfare system coordination and integration, a framework for improved outcomes* (3rd ed). Models for Change (citing Wiig and Widom, 2003).

^{xvii} A 15-year follow-up study of a nurse home visiting program for low-income, at-risk pregnant women in Elmira, New York, found that there were 79 percent fewer verified reports of child abuse and 56 percent fewer arrests of 15-year-old children for the treatment group than for the comparison group. The program has been shown to be effective with both African-American and white families in both rural and urban settings. A Rand study of early intervention programs that targeted at-risk children and their mothers also showed reduced criminal activity and child abuse. Wiig & Tuell, *Guidebook for juvenile justice & child welfare system coordination and integration*, citing Blueprints, n.d.

^{xviii} Wiig & Tuell, *Guidebook for juvenile justice & child welfare system coordination and integration*.

^{xix} National Conference of State Legislatures. (2011). *Cost-benefit analysis of juvenile justice programs: Juvenile justice guide book for legislators*. <http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cj/jjguidebook-costbenefit.pdf>

^{xx} Title IV-E of the Social Security Act provides federal matching funds to help states pay for foster care placements for children who meet federal eligibility criteria. It provides financial reimbursement to states, on a matching basis, to provide board and care for low-income children who have been placed out of home; administrative support, including case management, development of case plans, and home and school visits; and for those who have been removed, administrative support to facilitate their return home. Title IV-E can be used for youth who have been adjudicated delinquent if they meet all of the federal foster care criteria and are placed in an allowable placement. The funds also may be potentially available to pay for some administrative costs associated with supervising or managing youth in the community. Some states like Ohio and some counties in Oregon have been utilizing title IV-E dollars for years to pay for juvenile justice costs in the state. Multnomah County, Oregon, is drawing down more than \$800,000 to help pay for at-risk youth to stay home or in foster care while they are on probation, instead of sending them to an institution. Title IV-E funds also pay for expenses such as home visits, school visits, and shelter and drug treatment placements for youth who are on probation. The county also utilizes the funds to pay for intensive wraparound services for medium- to high-risk youth and their families in lieu of sending them to secure institutional facilities. They also have been able to fund juvenile court counselor positions, shelter beds, and competency and skills groups.