



# 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## The Building Blocks of Our Agenda

At Children's Alliance, we see a future in which all of Washington's children have an abundance of what they need to grow up to be the people they dream of becoming. To make this vision a reality and combat harms created by systemic racism, we work with those most negatively impacted by current laws to ensure that our state prioritizes progressive policy changes in the areas of **early learning**, **health care**, and **economic justice**.

We work to advance legislation that aligns with our policy priorities, to ensure that legislation is implemented as intended, and to combat efforts to reverse progress that has already been made. To do this, our advocacy involves a combination of the following actions:

- **Leading:** We work directly with a legislative sponsor to craft and draft proposed legislation and function as the lead stakeholder for the issue.
- **Tier 1 support:** We activate every available tool of advocacy we have to support and help move policy through the legislative process. This includes grassroots organizing, engaging in public testimony, and working with stakeholders to educate lawmakers about the issue and our proposed solutions.
- **Tier 2 support:** We support the efforts of other advocacy groups by endorsing policy initiatives or bills by signing in at bill hearings and signing on to letters of support directed to elected officials and other key decision-makers.
- **Monitoring:** We monitor initiatives or bills throughout the legislative process and once they have been enacted into law and are in the administrative/implementation phase. Monitoring generally involves attending committee hearings, tracking the progress of bills, and assuring that implementation follows the Legislature's original intent.

The sections that follow highlight our priorities and advocacy plans for the 2024 legislative session.

### Early Learning & Child Care

#### Our Plan

<b>Investing \$1.75 million annually to expand access to Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC)</b> , addressing the 100+ IECMHC programs on the waitlist and other current needs.	Tier 1 support
<b>Providing the Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidy to all child care staff</b> regardless of whether they work around their own children or reside in a border state.	Tier 1 support
<b>Increasing Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) Rates</b> as outlined in the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) <a href="#">decision package</a> .	Tier 1 support
<b>Eliminating licensing fees</b> for child care center providers.	Tier 1 support
<b>Directing DCYF to work with providers in connection to House Bill 2556</b> to address inequities in existing education requirements and educational equivalents and extend deadlines for completion.	Monitor
<b>Safeguarding the Transition to Kindergarten program</b> by ensuring that rulemaking follows legislative intent.	Monitor

### We also broadly support the following progressive proposals:

- Funding stipends to retain and support experts with lived experience who serve on advisory bodies
- Addressing the 1% levy growth limit
- Paying providers for full months of Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) services
- Banning isolation and mechanical and chemical restraints on children
- Increasing non-standard hour bonuses to \$500
- Increasing the infant rate enhancement to \$500
- Closing loopholes in the capital gains tax
- Expanding the definition of "family" under the paid sick leave law to align with the Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) definition

**We also broadly support the following progressive proposals, *continued*:**

- Increasing dedicated funding for rural communities
- Supporting health & safety of agency staff
- Supporting WCCC eligibility for all providers
- Increasing coordination between health and early childhood systems
- Increasing support and access to care in child care deserts
- Aligning eligibility criteria across key programs to exclude non-taxed income from income eligibility decisions
- Allowing eligibility for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program / Basic Food to mean automatic eligibility for ECEAP and Early ECEAP
- Improving compensation and benefits packages for providers and their families



**Health Equity**

**Our Plan**

<b>Improving youth behavioral health services</b> <u>as recommended by the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group</u> to address the increased demand for intervention and crisis services and the decreased capacity in service delivery as a result of provider and facility shortages.	Tier 1 support
<b>Eliminating child marriage in Washington</b> by amending current state law that allows marriages involving minors if certain conditions are met. ( <u>House Bill 1455/Senate Bill 5695</u> )	Tier 1 support
<b>Ensuring universal free school meals</b> by expanding current state law to provide free school breakfast and lunch to all students across all public schools.	Tier 1 support
<b>Increasing access to oral health care</b> by ensuring that the <u>2023 dental therapy expansion</u> is implemented according to legislative intent.	Monitor
<b>Protecting minors from female genital cutting (FGC)</b> by ensuring that implementation of the 2023 FGC law, which was passed thanks to the <u>leadership of survivors</u> , is effective and follows the legislative intent.	Monitor



**Progressive Revenue & Economic Justice**

**Our Plan**

<b>Establishing a fairer state tax system</b> by charging a 1% tax on household wealth over \$250 million resulting solely from ownership of financial property like stocks and bonds. ( <u>House Bill 1473/Senate Bill 5486</u> )	Tier 1 support
<b>Creating a statewide pilot program for guaranteed basic income</b> to help those experiencing major life transitions or high economic instability and reduce economic inequality. ( <u>House Bill 1405</u> )	Tier 1 support
<b>Creating a baby bonds program</b> that would help address barriers to wealth accumulation by allowing the state to invest money on behalf of kids from families with low incomes that the kids could use as adults toward postsecondary education, homeownership, and entrepreneurship. ( <u>House Bill 1094/Senate Bill 5125</u> )	Monitor
<b>Protecting consumers with low incomes against corporate greed</b> by closing a loophole in state law that allows corporations to profit from unused money on gift cards and corporate rewards apps.	Tier 2 support
<b>Defending the capital gains tax</b> by combatting continued efforts by greedy bad actors to keep the wealthiest few from paying their fair share.	Tier 1 support
<b>Safeguarding progress made through the Working Families Tax Credit</b> by ensuring that implementation allows for continued success of the program.	Monitor

*Our agenda is a living document, and we expect to add to and revise portions of it as the legislative session progresses and new information comes to light. More information about our agenda can be found at [childrensalliance.org/blog/2024-legislative-agenda](https://childrensalliance.org/blog/2024-legislative-agenda)*