

Addressing King County's PSTAA Goals: Early Learning Facilities

In December 2017 the King County Council identified 7 goals (in bold below) for Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account (PSTAA) funding. Early learning, done well and with intentionality around addressing historical racial disparities, is essential to all of them.



Ensure every child in King County is ready for kindergarten The data is crystal clear: children who start behind, stay behind. Across Washington, only 46.7% of children are demonstrating kindergarten readiness across all measured domains. For low-income children, that number drops to 31.5%.¹ Every child should feel ready, welcomed, and valued when they walk into their kindergarten classroom – we need to set the stage for a successful transition from early childhood into the K-12 system. Meaningful progress toward this goal requires strong commitment to expanding early learning opportunities. Early learning facilities are a critical component of making that possible.

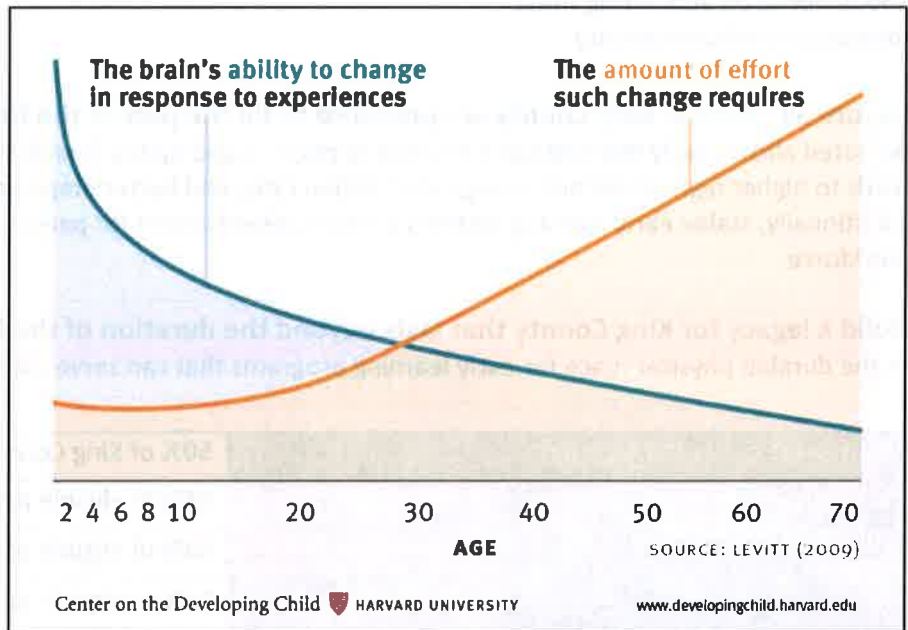
Improve educational outcomes for children and youth who are homeless, in the foster care system, in the child welfare system, involved in the juvenile justice system or otherwise vulnerable Only 26.8% of children experiencing homelessness are kindergarten-ready. For homeless and foster children facing unpredictable circumstances with frequent disruptions of their environments and relationships, access to stable early learning where their healthy development is the focus is critical. Washington ranks #1 in the country for out-of-home entries into the child welfare system for children under one year old.² Emerging research shows that early learning can promote safety and permanency for children in the child welfare system – providing support, resources, and respite to parents that decrease rates of child abuse and neglect. Additionally, studies show that early learning increases school readiness outcomes for children in the child welfare system.³ Within a facilities investment, King County could be intentional in serving children who are homeless and/or in foster care by setting criteria or creating incentives that prioritize these populations.

Close the opportunity gap for children and youth of color and low-income children and youth

The systemic structural disadvantages facing families starts from the beginning, with disparities across cognitive, social, behavioral and health outcomes apparent at 9 months and growing larger by the time children are 24 months old.⁴ The rapid development in the earliest years is prime time to make sure families are supported and systems are designed from the beginning to address inequity. The period from birth to five is the most impactful time to invest in improving education outcomes.

End the school to prison pipeline and reduce youth involvement in the

criminal justice system Low-income children and children with risk factors who do not have access to high-quality early learning experiences are 40 percent more likely to repeat a grade, 29 percent more likely to drop out of school, 41 percent more likely to be placed in special education, 60 percent more likely to never attend college, 33 percent more



¹<http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/WaKidsDetailPage.aspx?domain=WaKIDS&groupLevel=District&schoolId=1&reportLevel=State&yrs=2017-18&year=2017-18&wasCategory=18&chartType=1>

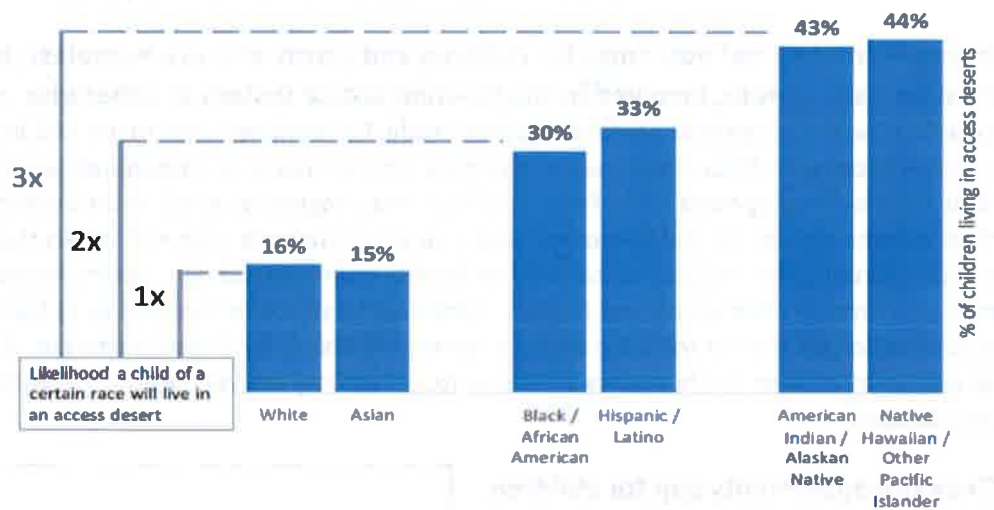
²<http://pocdata.org/visualizations/entry-rates>

³https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/opre_2016_benefitschildwelfaresystem_v16_508.pdf

⁴<https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/2009-52DisparitiesELExecSumm.pdf>

likely to be arrested as a juvenile, and 42 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime.⁵ The current scarcity of programs means that families may have few or no options available. While only one component of an early learning system, facilities is an urgently needed piece of expanding access to programs. Through Best Starts for Kids, King County is working to provide better support for child care providers through child care health consultation and considering how it can help address child care and preschool expulsion. Identifying ways to leverage that work by helping successful programs expand space could be a game-changer.

Embody the King County equity and social justice goal King County’s equity and social justice plan states: “We will invest upstream and where needs are greatest, addressing root causes and smartly allocating our public resources. We will also invest in community partnerships as a strategy to better understand and address equity impacts throughout our region.” Early learning stakeholders from across the county have come together to advocate for early learning facilities in this process, including innovative partnerships with affordable housing that build connections across systems. As a community, we have generated both quantitative and qualitative data showing both the needs and the inequities in the current system. Early learning was the only strategy to rate “High” in the King County PSTAA Strategy Assessment Report.⁶ We know that children of color in King County are disproportionately likely to live in early learning access deserts - clusters of zip codes with statistically-significant gaps in access to high-quality early learning services for children from low-income households. Any facilities implementation work should focus on addressing these inequities within the county.



Ensure all youth in King County are prepared to fill the jobs of the future As noted above, early learning has a key role to play in building the foundations of learning. High-quality early learning leads to higher high school and college completion rates and better employment outcomes in the long-term. Additionally, stable early learning systems provide infrastructure for parents of today to be productive members of the workforce.

Build a legacy for King County that lasts beyond the duration of the funding Investing in capital means investing in the durable physical space for early learning programs that can serve children over many years.

| % of King County PSTAA Fund | | 50% of King County PSTAA | 85% of King County PSTAA |
|--|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| % of eligible children access to subsidized early learning by 2036 | Children Ages 0-2 | 44% of eligible population | 73% of eligible population |
| | Children Ages 3-4 | 63% of eligible population | 100% eligible population |
| | Total Eligible Children | 54% of eligible population | 88% of eligible population |
| Total spaces created by 2036 | | 2,443 spaces | 3,951 spaces |
| Distinct Low-Income Children Served by 2050 | | 41,581 children | 69,307 children |
| Total Children Served by 2050 (incl over 200% FPL) | | 58,213 children | 97,029 children |

⁵ <https://educationvoters.org/advocacy-agenda/early-learning/>
⁶ https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/Council/documents/2018/PSTAA_Strategy_Assessment_Report_10-2018.ashx?la=en

EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR KING COUNTY CHILDREN & YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS, FOSTER CARE OR THE JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

| | Peer Population | Named Population |
|-----------------------|--|---|
| Early Learning | 46% met kindergarten readiness standards in all six domains | 25% of children experiencing homelessness met kindergarten readiness standards in all six domains 29% of children in foster care met kindergarten readiness standards in all six domains |
| K-12 | 80% graduation rate statewide | 55% graduation rate for youth experiencing homelessness 41% graduation rate for youth in foster care 21-28% graduation rate for youth involved in the juvenile justice system |
| Post-Secondary | 55% enrolled in a 2 or 4 year higher education institution within 2 years of high school graduation 16% earned a 4-year college degree by their mid-20s | 37% of students experiencing homelessness were enrolled 36% of youth in foster care were enrolled Fewer than 3% of students who experienced foster care earned a 4-year college degree by their mid-20s |

THE PSTAA NAMED POPULATIONS BY THE NUMBERS

Every year, more than 12,000 King County children and youth experience foster care, homelessness, or are involved in the juvenile justice system.

- There are around **1,550 children and youth in foster care**/out-of-home care in King County on any given day. About **41% of those children are under five years of age**. At least **50% are children and youth of color**.
- There were **9,500 students experienced homelessness** in King County's public K-12 school system in the 2016-17 school year. 65% were grades K-8 & 35% were grades 9-12. **82% of students experiencing homelessness in King County were students of color**.
- On average, **46 youth** are in King County Juvenile Detention **each day** over a year. **82% are youth of color**.

