



Transforming Systems to Improve Early Childhood Development in Washington

Through a grant with the Early Childhood Developmental Health Systems (ECDHS): Evidence to Impact Center, an innovative team in **Washington is strengthening and expanding local early childhood systems** to improve the health and well-being of young children and their families. With technical assistance and evaluation support from the ECDHS: Evidence to Impact Center, Washington is improving how local services work together so families can more easily get the care and resources they need — creating a lasting impact on young children's healthy development.



What is an early childhood system?

The network of child- and family-serving programs and services (e.g., health care, early learning, child welfare, housing) that exist in a region to help families grow and thrive. Comprehensive, well-designed systems support families to receive the services they need, when they need them.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN WASHINGTON

Washington concentrates its efforts in Grant County (central Washington) and Grays Harbor County (northeast Washington). Accomplishments are informing strategies and driving impact across the state.

Multi-Level Partnerships Strengthen Plans and Relationships



ACTION: Washington created a partner-based structure that brings together state, regional, community, and family representatives. This approach ensures activities meet local family needs and help expand effective strategies across the state. Washington also launched a statewide community of practice with more than 40 participants from 16 state agencies and local organizations. Participants meet regularly to design solutions together, share expertise and data, and coordinate efforts for young children under 3 across systems, sectors, and regions.



IMPACT: This partnership model has deepened trust among collaborators, improved alignment between state and local priorities, and accelerated promising strategies.

Families benefit from more coordinated services, and organizations are better able to respond together to emerging needs. These efforts are aligned with the ongoing implementation of the state's Early Learning Coordination Plan, which provides a framework for strengthening Washington's early learning system, to promote healthy development and school readiness.

County-Level Activities Drive Local and Statewide Change



ACTION: Partners in Grant County and Grays Harbor County facilitated coordination between regional early childhood coalitions and local public health departments to strengthen connections. In Grant County, partners hosted a community resource mapping event to improve information-sharing, and a group of community leaders meets monthly to guide collaboration. In Grays Harbor County, a public awareness campaign was launched, and a communications toolkit was created to share about early childhood development and local resources. The toolkit included handout cards distributed at libraries, grocery stores, and other businesses, as well as coloring sheets for restaurants. Grays Harbor is also adding family advisors to its early childhood coalition and strengthening engagement with health care providers to improve systems and policies and support families.



IMPACT: By investing in county-level collaboration, Washington is raising awareness about services available to families, strengthening family voices, and developing strategies that can be adapted and expanded to other communities across the state.



Data Focus Aligns Systems and Drives Solutions



ACTION: Washington identified existing data sets, tools, and resources to connect early childhood services. By using information gathered from a variety of family-serving sectors, the team is creating a fuller picture of family needs and system strengths. Evaluation plans are updated regularly to ensure strategies reflect the latest insights from partners.



IMPACT: This approach is helping 70 organizations across five counties and eight sectors (e.g., early learning, mental health, social services, public health) work together, generating actionable insights and identifying solutions that can be scaled and sustained at both state and local levels.

The Washington ECDHS team includes state government employees, health care professionals, and representatives from early childhood-focused, family-serving nonprofits. Visit www.earlychildhoodimpact.org for resources to support systems transformation and more information about the ECDHS: Evidence to Impact Center.

FROM DATA TO ACTION



Strengthening Regional Collaboration

Using community resource mapping and data collection, Grant County and its regional partners reorganized to elevate community voice and participation. They improved communications and rotated meeting locations to boost engagement. With representation across the region, more voices are being heard, and resources are better coordinated.

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