



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

OCTOBER 25TH, 2021

Present: Anne Granberg, Astrid Newell, Beverly Porter, Samya Lutz, Carol Frazey, Debbie Ahl, Escarleth DeLeon, Gregory Hansen, Jamie Desmul, Jen Wright, Keith Montoya, Komal Shah, Mara Kelley, Melissa Isenhardt, Ray Deck, Jed Holmes, Sterling Chick, Urvasi Graham, Vesla Tonnesson, Yarrow Greer

Not Present: Alicia Hanning, Brian Nelson, Chris Cochran, Mary Sewright, Mike Ford, Monica Koller, Rosalva Santos-Guzman, Sarah Cook, Sativa Robertson, Silvia Johnson

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
<p>Welcome</p>	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgement, housekeeping and review of agreements led by Lewin Consulting.</p> <p><u>Land Acknowledgement:</u> I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are here today on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish (LOCK-tuh-mish) people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and Semiahmoo. May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future. Our future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county. This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices of the first people of this land. Please join me in expressing the deepest respect for our indigenous neighbors, and gratitude for the enduring stewardship of our shared lands and waterways.</p> <p><u>Agreements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family and self-care come first. • Be kind and gentle with yourself and others and assume everyone is coming from a positive place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Everyone has the best intentions. ○ Listen with an open mind and heart. • Be mindful of this space. Step-in and step-out/Step-up and step-back. Offer your truth and insights and listen to others' truths and insights. • Treat each other with honor and grace. We are all working under difficult circumstances. • Embrace diversity. Remember that we all come from different backgrounds giving us different perspectives and only when we embrace that diversity can we develop creative solutions to address the child and family well-being needs in Whatcom County. • What is said here stays here. • Have fun. <p><u>Fist to Five Consensus</u></p>
<p>Approve Meeting Minutes</p>	<p>No amendments to discuss, minutes from October 11th, 2021 were approved as presented.</p>



<p>Upcoming events, community shares, shout outs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great job to the Resources and Funding group for their presentation to Whatcom County Council. • Whatcom Perinatal Mental Health Task Force is developing one to one peer support. Peer support provider recruitment opportunity: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1O29LfsPHEh24wE1zeKIBi6-56G-TzNQX5UTvHky2Egg/edit?usp=sharing • 4-H Para Familias Latinas is hosting a fundraiser Nov 6th from 5:00pm to 9:30pm at Bloedel Donovan Park, \$10 suggested donation per family. Celebration for Dia de Muertos. https://www.facebook.com/4HParaFamiliasLatinas/?fref=tag • Carol Frazey shared an appreciation and request for notice when public presenters will attend task force meetings and present information. In the last meeting there was no such notice. • Monica Koller received recognition from Whatcom Dispute Resolution for being a Peace Builder. Congrats to all the Peace Builder award recipients! https://www.whatcomdrc.org/peace-builder-awards/ • Online training called The Lion's Side: The Utilization of Storytelling for Transformation in Health. This is the link for more info if anyone is interested. https://www.pttcnetwork.org/centers/northwest-pttc/event/webinar-lions-side-utilization-storytelling-transformation-health
<p>Child Care Proposal Update</p>	<p>The Resources & Funding group presented the Child Care Proposal to the Whatcom County Council on October 12th. The group submitted a follow up response to Council, thanking them for their time, recognizing they have more work to do moving forward, and reiterating the immediate needs around child care staff retention and development. The workgroup will be meeting this week to discuss their next steps and the specifics that council identified.</p>
<p>Survey Results and Analysis</p>	<p>Twenty-two members have responded to the task force feedback survey. A full discussion of the results will be delayed to make time during this meeting for continued discussion about the Executive's proposal for an Office of Strategic Initiatives and its impact on infrastructure recommendations. Task force members Jennifer Wright, Keith Montoya, and Urvasi Graham have offered to meet in November and develop a proposal on member-led leadership for the task force to discuss. A volunteer from the County-Community Collaboration group would be a welcome addition.</p>
<p>Input for Public Health Advisory Board Racial Equity Convening</p>	<p>On Wednesday, Oct. 27, the Public Health Advisory Board (PHAB) is convening a group of representatives from Executive and County Council appointed boards and committees that the Health Department facilitates or supports. The PHAB played a role in helping to craft the Resolution Affirming Racism Is A Public Health Crisis and has developed this targeted approach to identify how the boards and committees the Health Department convenes address racial equity issues. They plan outreach to other external boards and committees in the future. There is a request for task force members (up to 3) to attend on behalf of this group, and for all task force members to reply to these Menti questions to take forward to the PHAB meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is the task force demonstrating the importance of racial equity work? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not sure ▪ More diverse than other groups ▪ Designated Family/Parent voice work group. Discussions around imbedding equity in county infrastructure for children and families ▪ We have had a lot of discussion about how to improve our community commitment to racial equity and are also trying to seek input and representation from community members ▪ I think by opening the task force to a wide variety of community members was a start but I don't know how much we've really delved into racial equity work at this point ▪ Allowing a different way to run a meeting. Allowed all voices to be heard. Task Force norms were established first ▪ I think the group is lifting it up in the process, and subgroups as well. However, the Child & Family Action Plan as the foundational document could do a stronger job of calling out being actively anti-racist in the recommendations ▪ The diversity has been brought to the table, but not sure if all the people are continuing on. Feels directed and like it is the same 5 people talking all the time and they are not BIPOC. Good start ▪ The process of uplifting underrepresented voices in the weekly/monthly work; the collaboration with other groups to check recommendations ▪ Not sure—I don't see us as a task force leading much yet. But I believe in us and I'm glad conversations come up. Thank you for asking

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I think that in the inception of the task force that thought was placed on who the members should be to ensure that there was racial diversity represented on the task force ▪ The voices of BIPOC communities are mentioned and considered but active engagement is limited at this time ▪ First: Making government more responsive/accountable to families. This has grown to become: making government more responsive to BIPOC and other marginalized communities. Second: by keeping racial disparity in outcomes central to our concern ▪ It is a priority, but I'm not sure it is functionally happening. The task force has no integration with other folks like (WREC) and are limited by the pools of people already in the conversation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On this task force, how have you seen the voices and experiences of community members who are Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color centered? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I haven't ▪ Still not perfect but more than any other task force ▪ Sharing lived experience ▪ Yes, generally. Not always. ▪ The voices of BIPOC communities are mentioned & considered but active engagement is limited at this time. ▪ The task force did well in incorporating representatives from some of these groups, but inviting to the table is just the 1st step. We probably need to do more work to actually ensure people in these groups feel they have had adequate opportunities ▪ The makeup of this group is unique with emphasis on representation from folks with lived experience. But the discussion – particularly in large group – minimizes the contribution of ALL voices. Esp. marginalized. ▪ We still need some more relationship building. We can't just call this a safe space for BIPOC representation and expect that BIPOC folks feel that way because we called it that. ▪ I think the only people that can truly answer this are the folks of color on the TF
<p>Building Infrastructure for Child & Family Work</p>	<p>Last week Tyler Schroeder, Deputy Executive of Whatcom County, and Erika Lautenbach, Director of Whatcom County Health Department, attended to discuss the infrastructure for child & family work.</p> <p>Executive Sidhu has been working to bring forward larger initiatives for the county into an Office of Strategic Initiatives, the director of which would report to the Executive. The Office would include initiatives on children and families, climate action, and racial equity. Currently discussing steps to provide a broader foundation in county government and the community for the work supporting children and families and how to move that action forward. Identified a need for a position in the Executive's Office to be a direct link between Bellingham and small cities leadership, community leadership, and the Health Department for cohesiveness in moving the strategic initiative forward.</p> <p>Executive Sidhu's hope is to provide infrastructure support to children and families through this office by creating two positions within the Health Department:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One for a Child and Family Manager/Strategic Lead, who would work with community partners to continue to move this initiative forward. • Another request is to add a Child Care Program Specialist, which would navigate priorities such as increasing capacity and affordable child care. <p>From a foundational standpoint this is just the start of the investment, with a one-, three-, and five-year plan. After staff and infrastructure is established, this task force and others would continue to define where additional investments can go, find the right funding and the right community organizations to help.</p> <p>Some of the investment plans next year and moving forward are related to the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars. Conversations are happening on how best to allocate these funds in 2022, 2023, and forward. Right now, there is \$2 million to be allocated in 2022 to focus on work force development, stabilization and retention related to child care. A request was made to hear recommendations from this task force about this. Another priority is increasing capacity for child care. The City of Bellingham is working with Bellingham Housing Authority on opportunities for facilities, and Opportunity Council is working with Whatcom County on a capital project on Forest Street.</p> <p>The departments have submitted budget requests.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were sent to Whatcom County Council on October 22nd. • Public hearing will be available at November 9th meeting.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote on adjustments takes place on November 23rd. <p>The Children & Families First workgroup met today with Tyler Schroeder to address questions raised by infrastructure plan from the Executive’s Office and how it would align or conflict with the recommendations that the work group has been shaping.</p> <p>Members shared this information from their discussion with Tyler:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jennifer Wright shared her take-away that the goal from the Executive’s Office is to get the budget in by the 9th to allocate the funds because the decisions will be made on November 23rd for this budget cycle. There are opportunities to create and submit an alternative proposal that could include adjusting funds and positions recommended. Going forward, this group can be actively involved in identifying the positions and descriptions, and how the funds will be used. ▪ Keith Montoya shared his take-away that the members could provide input to the positions directly related to the Child and Family Well-Being; however, the general overarching or other initiative related roles will go forward without input from this task force. ▪ Greg Hansen clarified that within local government the money gets appropriated by the County Council, but there is opportunity for the administration to identify the details of the job description and oversee the operational steps. His take-away also included that this task force’s input would be valued in position description, along with other community groups. ▪ Komal Shah requested clarity on whether this recommendation will limit future opportunities. ▪ Jed Holmes responded that decisions were made due to local government timeline with the budget approval process. Executive’s Office had hoped for more input from this group prior to this going forward to Whatcom County Council. The needs will change in the years coming and a lot of people will have input with the future of this infrastructure. These conversations are just getting started and the Executive’s Office is prioritizing child and family well-being. This task force was created to help inform county government on these matters. ▪ Jennifer Wright shared there is concern going forward about setting a precedent and recommended creating an order of operations for communicating and decision making. She wondered about opportunities for collaboration and information sharing between this task force and the other priority initiatives for climate action and racial equity. Others responded positively to this idea. Collaboration could inform other strategic oversight positions in the Executive’s infrastructure recommendation. <p>Infrastructure Concept: https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ROaxnV70JhMw6ME6dqNMoEzKMRtqS89H/edit#slide=id.p1</p>
Public Comment	No Public Comment
Closing	5:30 pm
<i>Next Meeting</i>	<p style="text-align: center;">Next regular meeting: November 8th, 2021</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Location: Virtual</u></p>