



 WVCE  
Whatcom Center for Early Learning

**52 Years**

# Big Picture, WCEL

Mission – to partner with families to provide high-quality, equitable, and comprehensive therapy and support services to children experiencing developmental delays and disabilities.

- Focus on children 0 to 6 and their caregivers
- 85% of brain development happens in the first 3 years of life

According to a RAND Corporation study, for every \$1 spent on Early Support programs, society saves \$17 in reduced special education costs during that child's school years. There are also improved high school graduation rates, lower rates of involvement with the criminal law system, and increased job income.



# WCEL Programming

- **Early Support Program** - In the last year, we have done 5,652 visits - SLP, PT, OT, Specialized Instructors, and Family Resource Coordinators supporting caregivers and babies 0 to 3
- **Early Learning Program** - Supporting child development, caregiver support, and relationship building. Currently classes in 5 locations in Whatcom County and soon to be 7
- **Mental Health Program** - Supporting children 0 to 6 and their caregivers. The mental health of a child is directly related to that of their caregivers, workforce development - mental health internship
- **Inclusive Childcare Program** - Helping support children with disabilities in childcare settings, providing training and resources for child cares and helping to keep kids enrolled and supported



# Agency Growth since 2020

- 40% growth in the kids and families we serve in Early Support Program
- Doubled our staff from 30 to 60
- Doubled the number of programs we are running
- Building systems, infrastructure, staffing, and capacity to carry out our mission and diversify our services and income
- The % of non-white families we serve has increased
- % of children in the foster care system has increased
- Budget was 2 million a year and now is over 5 million
- The more children we serve in early support services, the more funds we need to raise to supplement the state's per child support



# Family Outcomes Survey

WCEL scored above the State average on all indicators in Washington's Family Outcomes Survey. 94% of surveyed parents/caregivers in our services reported that we helped their family know their rights (vs. state average, 86%)



# Centering Equity – Leveling the Playing Field

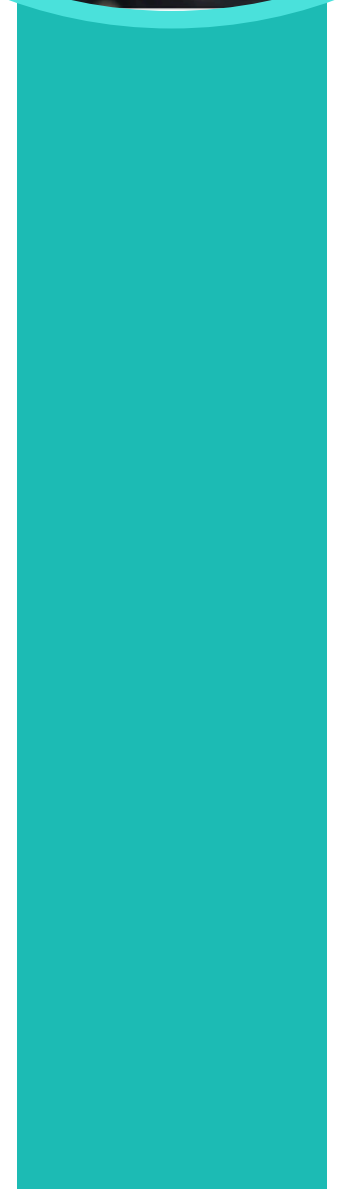
- Black and Latinx children with developmental delays are 78% less likely to have their need for early services identified, which means they are missing out on all of the benefits
- Early childhood is the time for children to develop essential social-emotional skills they need to succeed in school and life
- Early support services can disrupt the preschool to prison pipeline
- We need to continue to work to center equity and do better for our BIPOC families, and those families that experience language barriers / Culture Navigation and Language Access work with community stakeholders



# Babies Can't Wait Toolkit

WCEL has created films in Spanish, English and Arabic for early support providers across the state to use as outreach tools

Using films on social media, in medical offices, and by Family Resources Coordinators, outreach staff and health care providers to share directly with families to encourage them to give Early Support services a try





# Jude's Story

- Born at 27 weeks, 110-day Nicu stay and countless surgeries
- Jude should have been in early support services but wasn't - he was not able to crawl, drink, or eat by mouth, or even roll over
- Jude's family was taking him to visits across the county, they finally learned about WCEL and got into services at 2...

"After two visits with his early support team, he was crawling and using his body in ways I had never seen before. It was a huge turning point in our lives, I knew I finally had the support my son needed. This program has given us so much! Jude is now almost 3 years old and is walking, talking, eating, and drinking by mouth... I have been provided with so much support, emotional, physical, and even help getting groceries and gas. Early support services change lives, not only the child's but also the parents."

