



Candidates for Washington State Legislature: What kids need from you in 2019

State lawmakers can take important steps to improve kids' lives in the 2019 state legislative session. Candidates for the Washington state legislature will make critical choices for our kids if they are elected in November. Their choices can help kids have great childhoods and grow up strong, and advance racial equity and opportunity for all our kids. **Here are five questions for candidates for the state legislature about Children's Alliance 2019 priorities for Washington's children, youth and families.**

1. Will you support expanding dental therapy to bring urgently needed oral health care to kids and communities statewide?

Across our state, in communities big and small, people are suffering without access to dental care. We can do better. [Dental therapists](#) are early intervention and prevention dental professionals who provide a limited scope of services under the supervision of a dentist. Dental therapy is proven to improve access to care and close racial disparities in oral health. Currently dental therapy is allowed only on tribal lands in Washington. We'll be working to pass a law to expand dental therapy to all of Washington.

2. Will you include dental health coverage in the COFA Islander Health Care program?

Preventive care and treatment should include access to dental care to achieve positive results for overall health. The [COFA Islander Health Care Program provides access to care for Washingtonians from three Pacific Islander nations with Compacts of Free Association \(COFA\) with the United States.](#)

Washingtonians from COFA nations work, pay taxes and serve in every branch of the United State military They deserve equitable access to health care, including oral health care.

3. Will you help families with babies and young children access high-quality infant care and child care?

Every working parent should be able to choose care that works for their family and helps their child thrive. [But a year of child care for a baby in Washington state costs more than tuition at a public college or university.](#) Working Connections Child Care can help, but it doesn't come close to covering the cost of

care. As a result, few providers serve families that use Working Connections. Investment in Working Connections will improve care and support working families.

4. Will you strengthen our state's high-quality preschool program – the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP)?

Today's babies, toddlers and preschool-age children are tomorrow's K-12 students. Quality pre-kindergarten for preschool-age children is in high demand and short supply. Access to care is unequal, and that creates disparities in school-readiness. The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is high-quality preschool for 3- and 4-year-olds. [ECEAP](#) provides two-generation supports and it is proven to help families thrive and help children succeed in school. But it doesn't reach all the kids that could benefit. More children need access to ECEAP in their communities. State lawmakers should expand ECEAP to reach more kids and invest to build and maintain a racially and ethnically diverse workforce of preschool teachers.

5. Will you ensure that Washington has stable, fair revenue to invest in kids? Investments in the well-being of our youngest generation create a brighter future for us all. [Washington's tax code is not providing reliable revenue](#) to meet our needs. It's too dependent on regressive sources of revenue that aren't growing with our modern economy. All our kids deserve support to grow up into the adults they dream of becoming. When we limit our resources we hurt all our kids, and we hurt the kids with the greatest needs the most. Lawmakers should close wasteful tax breaks and adopt new sources of revenue.

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