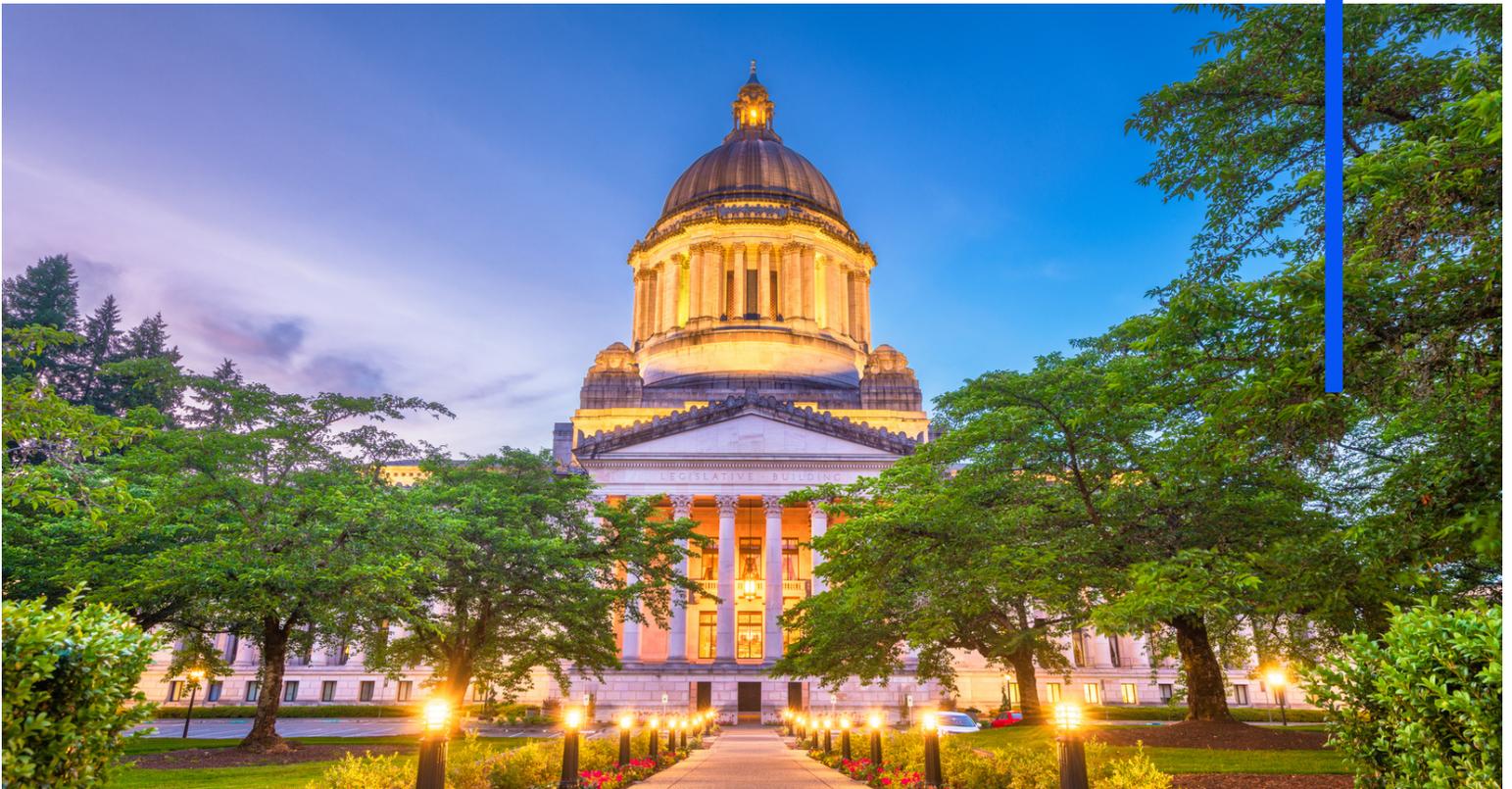




LEGISLATIVE REPORT

2023



A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We have much to celebrate at the close of the 2023 legislative session. Together with our members and partners, we achieved significant wins on youth mental health, oral health care, child care and much more. After over a decade of hard work by advocates, dental professionals, Tribal leaders, and our partners at the Washington Dental Access Campaign, the legislature voted to take a big step forward for oral health access and passed HB 1678, which will expand the practice of dental therapy into community-based health care settings across the state. This legislation will enable dental therapists to treat kids and families in communities where dental care is often out of reach, addressing significant (and often racialized) gaps in access to care.

Children's Alliance expanded our work in children's health and strengthened coalition connections by working alongside the Health Coalition for Children and Youth to pass bills aimed at addressing the youth behavioral health crisis. We also joined with the Washington Coalition to End FGM/C to pass SB 5453, which will ban the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting on children in Washington, provide education in communities where the practice takes place and provide support for survivors.

At the end of March, the state Supreme Court upheld the capital gains tax and validated the legislation we worked so hard to pass in 2021. We were instrumental in defending this highly progressive tax, which raises essential revenue for the continued implementation of the Fair Start for Kids Act and will help expand access to high-quality early learning and K-12 education for Washington's kids.

There is still work to be done and Children's Alliance will be monitoring the implementation and impact of the legislation that we advocated for this session. We are grateful to work alongside our partners and advocates from across the state to build a better and more racially-just future for all our children.



Dr. Stephan Blanford



— — — — — ” — — — — —

Together with our members and partners, we achieved significant wins in youth mental health, oral health care, child care and much more.



EARLY LEARNING

Whether in child care, home visiting, or pre-K, all children deserve quality early experiences with caregivers who are committed to helping them flourish.

Children's Alliance worked closely with partners in the [Early Learning Action Alliance](#) (ELAA) to pass meaningful legislation that strengthens our early learning workforce and increases families' access to affordable quality child care. [Children's Alliance also helped secure important funding](#) in the budget to support the fulfillment of the [Fair Starts for Kids Act](#), which ensures that families have access to high quality early learning opportunities.

Throughout the session, Children's Alliance coordinated written and oral testimonies with partners, and participated in coalition discussions and conversations with legislators. We continually called attention to our collective need for a robust early learning ecosystem—one that drives the overall success of our economy by providing kids with a strong foundation and allowing families to go to work. By supporting our members to advocate for these bills and through close collaboration with partners, **we successfully passed our early learning priority bills.**



HOUSE BILL 1550

[HB 1550](#), which would establish a statewide Transition to Kindergarten program. This bill passed!



SENATE BILL 5225

[SB 5225](#), which would extend child care subsidy eligibility to child care employees, mixed status immigrant families, and families in therapeutic courts, passed!



SENATE BILL 5316

[SB 5316](#), which would lower barriers to employment for early learning educators by waiving the fees they face to submit background checks, passed!



HEALTH EQUITY

Every child deserves to experience their optimal health.

Children's Alliance worked on a variety of initiatives with partner organizations and coalitions to bring forward bills that will advance racial equity and improve the health of our state's kids and families.

We helped lead the [Washington Dental Access Campaign](#) in successfully advocating for the expansion of dental therapy to more clinic settings. We also worked alongside the [Health Coalition for Children & Youth](#) to pass numerous bills that aim to address the youth behavioral health crisis. We partnered with survivors and advocates in the [Washington Coalition to End FGM/C](#) to make Washington the 41st state to ban the harmful practice of female genital mutilation/cutting. Moreover, we joined with other coalitions, including the Washington Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition, the Community Water Fluoridation Task Force, and the Washington Reproductive Health Coalition, to move many other important bills.



HOUSE BILL 1678

[HB 1678](#), which will authorize dental therapists to practice in community health clinics across the state, passed! Dr. Stephan Blanford provided testimony for the bill in the House and Senate, urging legislators to consider the importance of dental therapy for our state's most underserved children.



HOUSE BILL 1251

[HB 1251](#), which would protect community water fluoridation systems across the state, passed! Fluoridation is an effective and equitable way to prevent tooth decay.



SENATE BILL 1238

[HB 1238](#), which would expand free and low-cost school meals to kids through grade four in certain school districts, passed!



HOUSE BILL 1580

[HB 1580](#), which would create a statewide support system for youth with complex behavioral health needs that are boarded in hospitals, passed!



SENATE BILL 5453

[SB 5453](#), which would ban the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting on minors in Washington state and provide critical outreach and prevention efforts, passed!



ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Children thrive when their families have the economic resources they need and our tax system is fair.

This legislative session, Children’s Alliance worked closely with organizational partners and within the [Balance Our Tax Code \(BOTC\)](#) and [Working Families Tax Credit \(WFTC\)](#) coalitions to advance economic justice in Washington state. Through a series of strategically coordinated written and verbal testimonies with partners, email action alerts to legislators, informative social media posts, and letters to budget writers, **we garnered greater legislator and public support for progressive revenue** that would ensure adequate resources for vital services throughout the state. Children’s Alliance also educated our members and the general public about how progressive revenue and cash back programs will **support children and communities of color across the state and advance racial justice.**



HOUSE BILL 1045

[HB 1045](#), which would establish a statewide guaranteed basic income pilot program, was introduced for the second time this year. This legislation did not pass, but funding was provided in the budget to continue a local program, [Growing Resilience in Tacoma](#).



HOUSE BILL 1473 / SENATE BILL 5486

[HB 1473/SB 5486](#), which would create a more fair tax system by enacting a narrowly tailored property tax on extreme wealth, received a hearing in each chamber this legislative session, one more hearing than in previous sessions. [Dr. Blanford provided testimony in the House](#). This legislation did not pass, but we consider this as a step forward in this multi-year campaign to pass a statewide wealth tax.



HOUSE BILL 1477

[HB 1477](#), a bill that provides administrative and technical fixes to the [Working Families Tax Credit](#) to ensure survivors of domestic violence eligibility to receive vital cash back, passed!

We are grateful to our legislators who have pushed for these wins during a tighter budget year. We also urged lawmakers to **consider options that would generate progressive revenue for the state**, such as changes to the estate tax, so we can fully fund our state’s commitment to families in future years.

JOIN US FOR

VOICES FOR CHILDREN

Celebrating 40 years of service to
Washington's children and families

THURSDAY, JUNE 1, 2023
SODO PARK, 3200 1ST AVE S, SEATTLE, 98134

Check in: 11am | Program and Lunch: 11:30am-1pm

Register online: bit.ly/voicesforchildren2023



Featured speaker

DR. DOROTHY BROWN

**How do we bend history towards justice
and create a better future for every
child?**

Dr. Dorothy Brown, professor of law at Georgetown University Law Center, will explore this question and the far-reaching impacts of public policy on our children's well-being. An advocate for economic and social justice, Dorothy is the author of *The Whiteness of Wealth*, a groundbreaking exposé of racism in the American taxation system. The book was named one of best of the year by *NPR* and *Fortune*.

**Connect
with us**



childrensalliance.org



[facebook.com/
childalliancewa](https://facebook.com/childalliancewa)



113 Cherry St. Box 87190
Seattle, WA 98104



[linkedin.com/company/
childalliancewa](https://linkedin.com/company/childalliancewa)



(206) 324-0340



@ChildAllianceWA