

Thank You for Your Continued Support

King County thanks the Legislature for its continued support for children with developmental delays or disabilities, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), and their families.

King County's intentional efforts to become an anti-racist county includes a commitment to center our work on the communities of People with Disabilities, Black, African American, Indigenous, and People of Color. King County used a community informed approach to develop the following 2022 priorities.



King County Developmental Disabilities Legislative Priorities for 2022:



Promote equitable access and connections to culturally relevant services and resources in the community for individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families.



Increase accessible, equitable, healthy, safe, and affordable housing options, including housing for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.



Improve access to Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) services by eliminating families' out-of-pocket costs, including co-pays, co-insurance, and deductibles, while protecting agencies' ability to bill private insurance for ESIT services.



Invest in employment to support economic recovery and build on state investments in special education.

Transforming How We Do Business

King County continues to hear from Black, African American, Indigenous, and other People of Color communities on the need for the county to co-create systemic changes that result in equitable outcomes for these communities, especially individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) or delays and their families.



EQUITABLE ACCESS AND CONNECTIONS

Promote equitable access and connections to culturally relevant services and resources in the community for individuals with disabilities of all ages and their families.

Supporting these actions will ensure equitable access to culturally relevant services and resources:



Increase Language Access

Fund Specialized Training for Interpreters and Translators on Disability Issues



Fund Statewide Cultural Navigation Services

Bridging Disability Supports and Cultural Supports



Invest in a Workforce Reflective of BIPOC Communities

To Recruit, Retain and Train



Increase Access to Recreational, Social, and Other Community Supports

A Lack of Inclusive Spaces and Places to Connect

A Community Rich in Cultures and Languages

Many of our residents face barriers to getting their needs met from service systems and experience racial, cultural and language biases.



REPRESENTATION MATTERS

Representation lifts the individual's and families' burden of needing to explain culture and racial experiences, and it allows for open dialogue that is relevant, relatable, supportive and without implicit bias.



INCREASE ACCESSIBLE, EQUITABLE, HEALTHY, SAFE, AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

Increase accessible, equitable, healthy, safe, and affordable housing options, including housing for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and their families.

More Affordable Housing Options are Needed for Individuals with I/DD

A wide range of affordable housing options, including adult family homes, single family homes, apartment units, and scattered housing sites are needed to enable individuals with I/DD to be included in the community and contribute socially and economically to the communities where they live.



Low-Income People with I/DD Need Affordable Housing

In King County, housing can cost almost twice the monthly income of individuals who rely on SSI. The [2021 monthly SSI payment in Washington is \\$794](#), while [the 2020 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development fair market rate for a one-bedroom apartment in King County is \\$1,599](#).

\$794



\$1,599

TAKE ACTION

- Fund More Affordable Housing by Increasing the Housing Trust Fund by \$400 Million
- Approve a five-year extension of the Foundational Community Supports initiative under the state's Medicaid Transformation Project
- Increase Aged, Blind and Disabled (ABD) Grants to Match SSI and Maintain Housing and Essential Needs (HEN)



ELIMINATE FAMILIES' OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS FOR EARLY SUPPORT FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

Improve access to Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) services by eliminating families' out-of-pocket costs, including co-pays, co-insurance, and deductibles, while protecting agencies' ability to bill private insurance for ESIT services.

Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) is essential for children in Washington State

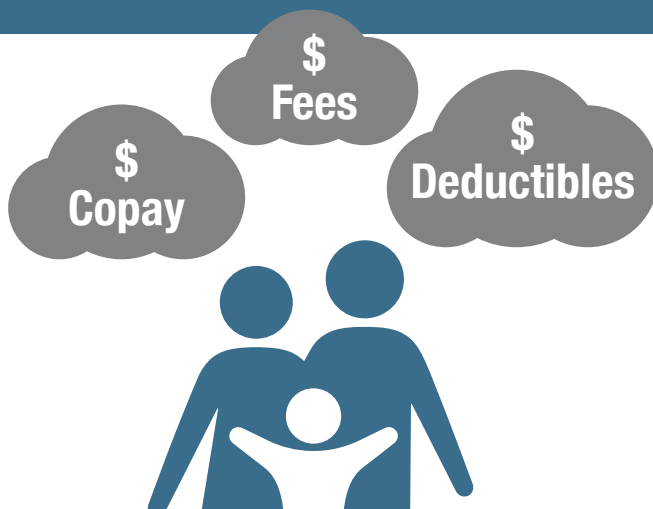
Early Supports during children's first three years of life can help promote optimal brain development. Families get help from ESIT to address children's developmental delays or disabilities. Early Supports also reduce later costs.



In 2020, only 5,266 children were served in King County, due to a reduction in referrals during the first year of COVID. It is estimated that more than twice as many children would be eligible if referred to services.

Out-of-Pocket Costs Create Barriers for Families

The state's policy requires that families use insurance for ESIT services, such as speech therapy, or be placed on a sliding fee scale. Families who use private insurance to pay for ESIT are charged co-pays, co-insurance, and deductibles.



"We are supposed to get weekly feeding therapy, but we have cancelled visits because the out of pocket costs are too high on top of the \$2070 a month we pay for child care. One therapy visit was \$480 out of pocket, and we have good insurance!"

~ King County Parent

Due to financial worries about the costs, families with private insurance often reduce or decline ESIT services or exit services early, even when their child needs more support.



ELIMINATE FAMILIES' OUT-OF-POCKET COSTS FOR EARLY SUPPORT FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS (continued)

Remove Cost Burdens on Families...

Washington State is one of only two states in the country that currently requires parents to pay out-of-pocket. President Biden's proposed fiscal year 2022 budget includes a \$250 million nationwide increase for ESIT type services. It also stops any state receiving this funding from charging family fees or requiring out-of-pocket costs for these services.



...But Allow Insurance Billing For ESIT Agencies

However, public funding does not cover all the costs of providing individualized ESIT services. Access to private insurance is still needed to enable ESIT provider agencies to keep these services available. The proposed federal budget leaves open the possibility for state action to support insurance billing--provided families are not billed out-of-pocket costs--while ESIT agencies are still able to bill insurance. State action is needed to ensure this can occur.

**TAKE
ACTION**

Improve access to Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) services by eliminating families' out-of-pocket costs, including co-pays, co-insurance, and deductibles, while protecting agencies' ability to bill private insurance for ESIT services.



INVEST IN EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH

Invest in employment to support economic recovery, and build on state investments in special education.

Employment Services for Individuals with I/DD Benefit Everyone

Employment services help persons with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD) find and keep competitive jobs in the community that align with their preferences, interests, and strengths. This promotes financial stability and independence as well as personal well-being that comes from increased social connections and opportunities to engage with and contribute to the community.

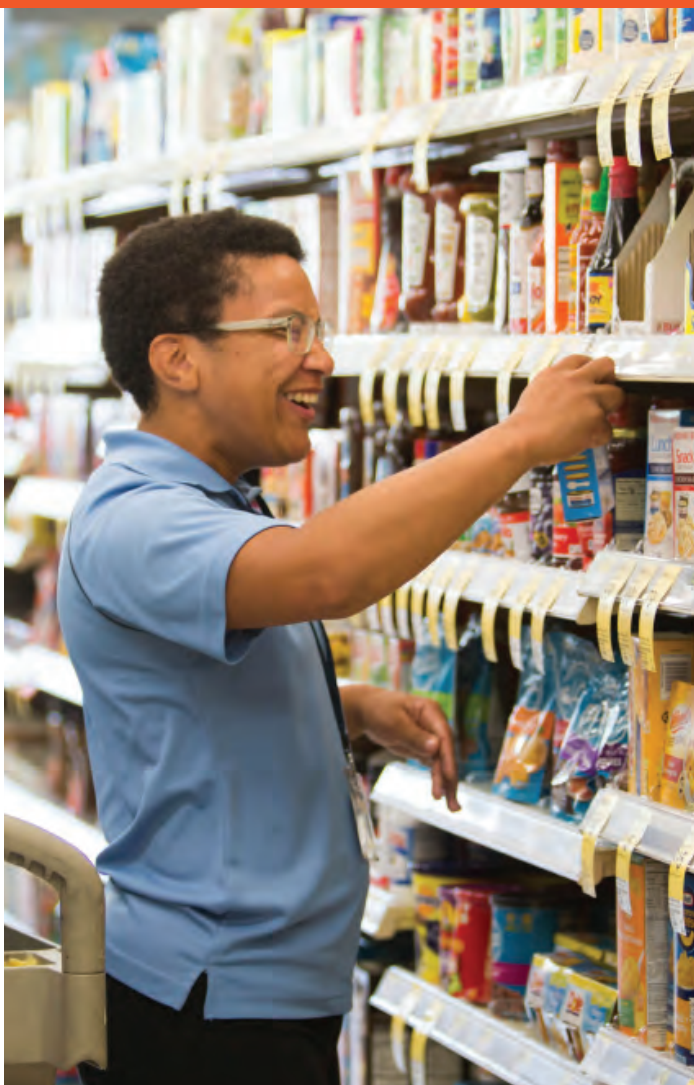
“Despite their ability, desire, and willingness to work, people with I/DD experience a jobless rate nearly three times that of those without disabilities.”

State Data: The National Report on Employment Services and Outcomes Through 2017



TAKE ACTION

Increase the rate for Employment and Day Program services to support provider sustainability and growth and help get people with I/DD back to work.



Staff Recruitment and Retention is Dependent on a Livable Wage

Currently, the statewide staffing shortage is threatening the future of services, resulting in reduced or suspended services for many individuals.

Individuals with I/DD Need Sustainable Support to Participate in the Workforce

King County's services for persons with I/DD have been consistently recognized as the best in the nation. We can continue if we implement a reimbursement rate that allows providers to maintain business operations, provide required training for highly skilled staff, and offer competitive wages. The community-based work they provide is essential support for persons with I/DD to seek, obtain, and keep employment.



INVEST IN EMPLOYMENT AND YOUTH (continued)

Improve Transition Outcomes for Students Leaving High School

High school transition age is a critical period for individuals with I/DD to start working. Providing employment services to students with I/DD before they leave school makes all the difference for their future. Students who have paid work experience, or leave school with a job, are over four times more likely to remain employed and be included in community life. Those who do not have access to employment services are at risk of becoming isolated from the community and losing learned skills that lead to gainful employment.



Washington's Cross-Agency Transition Collaborative

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Department of Social and Health Services Developmental Disabilities Administration and Division of Vocational Rehabilitation have collaborated on a report recommending ways to build capacity in school districts to improve transition planning for students in special education. Supporting these recommendations will expand School-to-Work statewide, establish data sharing with state agencies, and support students and families to learn about transition services and resources.

TAKE ACTION

Implement the recommendations identified in the State Transition Collaborative's January 2021 report to improve transition outcomes for students leaving high school.