

The Healthiest Next Generation Initiative

Policy Brief – February 2016

Research shows that, for the first time in our history, this generation is not expected to live as long as the previous generation.¹ This should be unacceptable to us. We need to make the next generation the healthiest generation in the history of our state.

—Governor Jay Inslee
2014 State of the State Address

In September 2014, Governor Jay Inslee launched the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative in collaboration with families, community leaders, businesses and agencies across the state to make our next generation the healthiest one ever.

The initial goal was to help Washington’s children maintain a healthy weight, enjoy active lives and eat well by creating healthy early learning settings, schools and communities.

Based on success in our first year, we were encouraged to expand the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative as a vehicle to improve other areas of children’s health.

Accomplishments

Funding made available in July 2014 supported temporary coordinator positions at the departments of Health and Early Learning and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Together, these agencies form a cross-agency team and achieved the following by June 2015:

Completed:

- Convened community, business and state agency leaders to create the healthiest next generation ever.
- Identified programs that work and prioritized recommendations for statewide action that help children be active and eat well in early learning settings, schools and communities.
- Provided toolkits with strategies to ensure children are active, eating healthfully and drinking clean water in early learning settings and schools.
- Promoted healthful eating and active living goals in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) contract.
- Revised statewide guidelines for health and fitness education to help children be more active at school and establish the concepts and skills necessary for safe and healthy living.



FOCUS ENVIRONMENTS

- **Early Learning:** licensed child care centers, family home care programs, school-age child care centers
- **Schools:** public and private K-12
- **Communities:** healthcare, local government, neighborhoods, parks, retailers, worksites

Additional Achievements:

- Washington State Hospital Association and Department of Health launched *Breastfeeding Friendly Washington Hospitals* in August 2015, a voluntary recognition program for hospitals implementing practices to support breastfeeding.
- Over 60 public and private partners and the Department of Health received a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to promote the purchase of fruits and vegetables by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients through supermarkets, farmers markets and health systems. (\$5.86M, plus \$5.86M in matching funds from partners)
- The Department of Health was selected to be part of a Learning Community State Partnership with the Childhood Obesity Intervention Cost Effectiveness Study (CHOICES) Project at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health. This project will provide cost-effectiveness modeling on three hypothetical state-specific childhood obesity interventions.

Governor's Council for the Healthiest Next Generation

Providing strategic direction for the initiative is a **Governor's council** composed of community, business and health and fitness leaders; legislators; and representatives from state agencies and local government. The council meets annually to discuss their top priorities for improving children's health.

2015–2017 budget investments

Investments aligned with recommendations by the Governor's council for the 2015–2017 biennium include:

- Funding to preserve and expand the ability of state parks facilities to enhance visitors' experience. (\$52.7M)
- Funding for new Safe Routes to School Program projects. (\$20M)
- Funding for local governments and other nonprofit organizations to construct or renovate outdoor facilities. (\$10.0M)
- Funding for Healthy Kids - Healthy Schools Grants with up to \$1M maximum dedicated to water bottle filling stations. (\$5.0M)
- Funding for Complete Streets. (\$3.3M)
- Funding for No Child Left Inside grants. (\$1M)
- Two-year funding for Healthiest Next Generation coordinator at the Department of Health. (\$246,000)



Replicating successes and piloting new ideas

The Healthiest Next Generation Initiative is intended to replicate the efforts underway in communities across Washington like the following:

- Kids in the Early Childhood Care Program at **YMCA of the Inland Northwest** are off to a healthier start due to changes in the program's menus and procurement processes that align with YMCA of the USA's Healthy Eating and Physical Activity standards. The program has enhanced the staff's whole foods cooking skills and has linked with Spokane's Step Up and Go Coalition's 85210 campaign.
- **Tahoma High School's Outdoor Academy** which integrates science, English language arts and physical education through students learning about rivers and streams, biology life, fly fishing and hiking.
- **City of Des Moines** has established physical fitness standards for city-sponsored youth recreation programs and aligned with Highline School District and state and national standards.
- To increase breastfeeding rates among new mothers, **Providence Mount Carmel Hospital** in Colville is increasing their breastfeeding friendliness. They qualified for "Silver" recognition level as part of *Breastfeeding Friendly Washington Hospitals* and will be going for "Gold."

For More Information

- Join us at [#HealthiestNextGen](#)
- www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/health-care/healthiest-next-generation-initiative
- www.doh.wa.gov/healthiestnextgen
- www.del.wa.gov/HealthiestNextGeneration
- www.k12.wa.us/StudentSupport/HealthiestNextGeneration



 Washington State Department of
Early Learning



 Washington State Department of
Health
DOH 120-047 February 2016



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To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TTY/TDD 711).

Photos: Students from Ilalko Elementary's PE Everyday Class, Olympia High School's Freedom Farmers program and the Community School of West Seattle

¹ Pam Belluck, "Children's Life Expectancy Being Cut Short by Obesity," The New York Times, March 17, 2005. http://www.nytimes.com/2005/03/17/health/17obese.html?_r=2& accessed on October 30, 2014.