

# OUR CHILDREN, OUR FUTURE

 Clark County | Data Report 2013



## INTRODUCTION

Did you know that over 35,000 children (8 percent of our population) birth through five years of age are growing up in Clark County?

Do you ever wonder how they are doing? Do you know when learning begins? Do you know why some children thrive and others don't?

Through creative partnerships, dedicated funders and just plain hard work, we are excited to share with you for the very first time the strengths and challenges children growing up in Clark County face. We believe children are our future, and now is the time to act to ensure that every child growing up in our community gets a healthy start.

There is ample research that leaves no doubt that if our children thrive, our community will thrive. The time is now, their future is in our hand, they are growing and learning today - we must act now because our Children Can't Wait.

PRESENTED BY:



SUPPORT FOR EARLY LEARNING & FAMILIES

SELFWA.ORG



# WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE?

Why aren't children ready for school?

What is happening with families and children?

Let's look at the facts:



What difference does quality preschool make? Children who experience quality preschool have ...

- 44 percent higher high school graduation rate
- 50 percent fewer teen pregnancies
- 33 percent lower arrest rate for violent crimes
- 26 percent lower likelihood of needing government assistance
- 42 percent higher monthly income



The cost of not having high quality preschool?

- Cost of one year of comprehensive, high quality preschool: \$6,630
- Cost of incarcerating a youth in juvenile detention for a year in Clark County: \$60,225

"Thriving adults don't just happen, they are the outcomes of the development of young children."

IRVING HARRIS  
Ounce of Prevention



Nearly 6,000-  
The number of babies born to families residing in Clark County each year



30% of Clark County five-year-olds enter kindergarten without the skills needed to succeed on the first day



When does learning begin?

- Brain research is complex, but its message is simple: Babies are born learning
- 90% of brain development occurs between birth and five years of age
- Long before a child enters school



What has a higher rate of return on investment than stocks between 1945-2008?

- Early childhood education has a 7-10% return on investment
- Investing in the early years makes it possible to harvest greater returns later on

# OUR CHILDREN, OUR FUTURE

In the beginning...  
Women in Clark County



**100,611**  
**women**

of child bearing age, 15-49 years of age, living in Clark County

**64% of**  
**women**

in this age range do not have medical insurance

**Between**  
**2007 & 2010,**  
Clark County had a  
**100% increase in**  
**domestic violence**

## What does this mean?

There are socioeconomic issues that impact babies long before pregnancy, affecting prebirth outcomes for children. For instance in Clark County:

- Women of child bearing age and pregnant women with low socioeconomic status have poorer health which may affect a developing baby.
- Two out of five women with less than a 12th grade education smoke cigarettes, more than double those with some college.
- Women are more likely not to have health insurance leading to poor health for these future moms.
- 15% of women giving birth have less than a 12th grade education in Clark County which is less than the state average of 18%. This is important because education is associated

with increased kindergarten readiness, better health and higher education attainment for themselves and their babies.

- Another important factor in mental and physical health for women is domestic violence. The rise in domestic violence in Clark County creates tremendous stress on every member of the family. This is important because stress has a significant physical and emotional impact on the developing brain of a child. Worth noting here is that there is only one domestic violence shelter in Clark County.

## Why is this important?

This is important because moms that are safe, healthy, and educated will have babies that are healthy, they will be able to keep their babies safe and they will be able to meet the needs of their developing baby.

# GET READY

## Pregnancy and Birth



51% of pregnancies are unintended

31% of births are to unmarried mothers

99% of children birth to 5 in Washington State have health insurance

48% of women in Clark County are covered by Medicaid during pregnancy

### Why is this important?

- Each baby is born with so much potential, opportunity and promise for their future. That promise must be nurtured by safe, loving, responsive families supported by their community.
- 90% of brain development occurs between birth and five literally laying the foundation for a child's entire future.
- Every stage of child development builds on the other. Just three weeks after conception, the human brain begins to form.
- In a child, the brain is far more impressionable (neuroscientists use the term plastic) in early life than in maturity. This plasticity has both a positive and a negative side. On the positive side, it means that young children's brains are more open to learning and enriching influences. On the negative side, it also means that young children's brains are more vulnerable to developmental problems if they experience stress and trauma.
- Raising a child is demanding, requiring a lot of skills and perseverance. Where do we learn how to parent? What resources or supports are available in our community for this most important task? What are the trusted sources of information for parents?

There are many excellent programs and resources for families in our community, and there are also many gaps. Gaps can be waiting lists for needed programs, limited resources in certain neighborhoods, transportation barriers, and in some cases, needed programs and resources have just disappeared. Our community can do more, we can improve the supports and resources available to our children.

### Community Effort

Along with Washington State's effort to provide child care, Clark County has a huge community resource in the PeaceHealth Neonatal Unit. This unit, which specializes in high-risk pregnancies, is a state-of-the-art hospital for delivery. SELF also has 20+ partner organizations, many working to support new parents and infants.

# NEW ARRIVALS

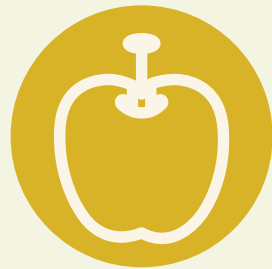
## Children from birth through age 5



### HOME

**14% of babies** born in Clark County are born into families living below poverty

**2,877 grandparents** in Clark County live with their grandchildren and are responsible for them



### HEALTH

**33% of children** birth to age 5 are enrolled in Head Start and ECEAP, are obese, and 2 out of 5 have had dental cavities

**32% of children** in Washington State birth to 5 do not have consistent medical oversight by a primary care provider

**48% of babies** born in Clark County receive WIC benefits



### EDUCATION

**38% of third graders** did not meet math standards

**28% did not** meet reading standards

**1,000 children** are served each year through Head Start and ECEAP in Clark County



### CHILD CARE-EARLY EDUCATION

**In Washington State**, a public kindergarten teacher earns \$48,483 per year, 57% more than a director of a child care center who earns approximately \$31,000 per year

**430 child care workers** in Clark County earn \$12 or less per hour

## Why is this important?

When does learning begin? At birth - long before a child enters kindergarten.

Every interaction, every experience a child has contributes to a child becoming a successful learner. Focusing on children from the day they are born is critical for the developing brain.

Children require safe, loving caregivers that are supported and knowledgeable so children are free to learn and explore through play with a sense of confidence.

- The opportunity gap appears long before a child enters kindergarten. The gap is widest for
  - children living in poverty,
  - children in homes where English is their second language
  - children exposed to violence, abuse or neglect
- National research indicates that at-risk children who don't get quality early care and education are:
  - 25 % more likely to drop out of school
  - 40% more likely to become a teen parent
  - 50% more likely to be placed in special education
  - 60% more likely to never attend college
  - 70% more likely to be arrested for a violent crime
- Even though many babies are covered by state-funded insurance, 32% of children do not have a primary care physician. Physicians often are the only "trusted voice" for families and an important link for families to resources and services.
- The nationally recognized Head Start and ECAEP programs are beneficial to help early learners who are behind; however, a long waiting list for eligible children exists, and only 25% of future students on the list actually attend classes. That means that 75% of those eligible will not have access to these programs.

# COMMUNITY ASSETS



1

Kindergarten transition is a focus, at both locally and statewide. The Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction leads the statewide WaKIDS', (Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills) effort in partnership with ESD 112 (Educational Service District 112) in Vancouver. SELF partners have worked hard on our local kindergarten transition efforts that complement WaKIDS. Local school districts, preschools, and child care programs are working to create a smooth transition from preschool into kindergarten. They've created a transition summary form and other useful documents which can be viewed on the SELF website, [www.selfwa.org](http://www.selfwa.org).

2

Legacy Salmon Creek Medical Center created a Child Abuse Assessment Team (CAAT) to address pediatric abuse. They work with local child protection agencies to keep our youngest residents safe.

3

Fort Vancouver Regional Library District opened its doors to a new library in downtown Vancouver in 2011, with 4,000 square feet dedicated to a state-of-the-art early learning center. The FVRLD also offers Read and Play, an outreach program that instills the importance of reading with children.

4

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation manages over 7,000 acres of parkland and 44 miles of trails throughout Clark County that are nature's play land for exploring and exercising.

5

Evergreen Public Schools went to full day kindergarten in 2010 to support learning early.

6

Vancouver Public Schools' program, Jump Start, helps prepare children for entry into kindergarten through a month-long readiness program leading up to kindergarten.

7

Along with Washington State's effort to provide child care, Clark County has a huge community resource in the PeaceHealth Neonatal Unit. This unit, which specializes in high-risk pregnancies, is a state-of-the-art hospital for delivery. SELF also has 20+ partner organizations, many working to support new parents and infants.




## SELF EFFORTS

SELF formed a collaborative of early learning organizations in 2001, beginning with six partners. Today, SELF represents 20+ partner organizations, made up of educators, health and mental health agencies, preschools and child care programs and professionals. For a full listing of partners and to obtain additional information, go to [selfwa.org](http://selfwa.org).

**We know that nurturing and loving a child goes a long way toward creating a successful adult. Successful adults are created through play in the sand box, in the woods exploring nature and sitting on the lap of an adult who loves them.**




### Education




SELF created of the Children Can't Wait Campaign to educate the community about the importance of early education, identify and attract resources, support families as their child's first teacher and develop needed programs.

### Outreach



SELF is building alliances and forming networks to advance early learning initiatives both locally and throughout Southwest Washington. Through collaboration with Thrive by Five Washington, SELF is leading the Love. Talk. Play. effort in Clark County.

### Partnerships



Partnerships are the foundation on which SELF began in 2001; and twelve years later, we still believe in the power of partnerships to plan, implement and sustain change that will benefit our children, their families and our entire community.



# SPEND TIME WITH A CHILD

10 simple, everyday things to do with a child

1

**Encourage Interaction** – Respond quickly to a child’s needs, involve yourself in her or his play and talk to him or her.

2

**Strong Self-Esteem** – Encourage, praise and respect your child.

3

**Communicate** – Talk, sing, play and read with your child.

4

**Promote Play** – Be your child’s playmate, use everyday household items in creative ways and get to know your child through play.

5

**Make Music** – Sing, rock, and dance together using household items, and play music in your home.

6

**Physical Touch** – Rock, hold and hug your child.

7

**Stable Relationships** – Be loving, nurturing and calm. Allow your child to explore.

8

**Read, Read, Read** – Every day, hold your child on your lap, point to pictures, ask questions, repeat the same books over and over. Write down a story your child tells and show it to her or him.

9

**Quality Child Care** – Watch for safe, supportive environments, nutritious meals, the number of children in care to the number of childcare providers and the way the caregivers respect the children.

10

**A Safe And Healthy Home** – Child proof your home, and visit the pediatrician and dentist.





**If we don't stand up for children, then  
we don't stand for much.**

Marian Wright Edelman | President and Founder, Children's Defense Fund



SUPPORT FOR EARLY LEARNING & FAMILIES

13504 NE 84th St. Suite 103-137 Vancouver, WA 98682  
debbie.ham@selfwa.org | 360.213.3486 | selfwa.org

**A caring community where all  
young children thrive!**

**The following organizations and people contributed to the information contained in this document:**

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