

INVESTING IN WASHINGTON'S FUTURE

Save the Children Action Network (SCAN) was founded in 2014 as the political advocacy arm of Save the Children and is the political voice for kids. Today, SCAN is working to mobilize more than **9,000 supporters in Washington** to make sure every child in the United States has access to high-quality early childhood education.

Our volunteer leadership network—based in **Seattle, Spokane, Tacoma and Vancouver**—actively engages parents, teachers, medical professionals and local business leaders who are passionate about advocating for kids. Additionally, we have Student Ambassador Programs at the **University of Washington, Seattle University, Washington State University, Union High School, Redmond High School and Anne Wright Upper School.**



Learn more about how to get involved at www.SavetheChildrenActionNetwork.org/Washington.

Opportunities for All Children in Washington

Investing in early childhood education is one of the most effective ways to break the cycle of poverty. These investments lay the foundation for success later in school and in life.

The Challenge

The environment and interactions children are exposed to during the first five years of life greatly influence their futures. Unfortunately, high quality early learning programs are out of reach for families across the nation, including in Washington, where **16 percent of children live in poverty and 70 percent of 3- and 4-year olds from low-income families are not enrolled in preschool or nursery school programs.** Further, according to the Washington State Department of Early Learning, **only 47 percent of Washington's kids were prepared for kindergarten in the 2016-17 school year.**

By age 4, children in poverty are as many as 18 months behind other children. By age 5, a child's brain is nearly completely developed, so it's critical to provide early learning opportunities from birth until kindergarten.

The Solution

Two generational high-quality early learning and care programs offer benefits to families and the entire country. A December 2016 report from Nobel Prize-winning University of Chicago economist James Heckman shows the rate of return on investments in early childhood development for children in high-quality programs can be 13 percent per child, per year due to improved outcomes in education, health, sociability, productivity and reduced crime.





We know that expanding access to high-quality education is the best way to close the growing opportunity gap in our country. **That's why SCAN is continuing to work with Republicans, Democrats and coalition partners in Washington to expand access to high-quality early childhood education and home visiting programs, including Save the Children's Early Steps to School Success program, which assists babies and young children with language, social and emotional development; equips parents with the skills and knowledge to be the first and most important teacher for their child; and develops strong home-school connections. Save the Children has been implementing education and health programs in Washington since 2008 and currently works with six schools in two counties to deliver these programs to nearly 1,000 children.**

Our Successes

With the help of our activist base in Washington, we have made great progress in advancing our goals for children in the Evergreen State and around the world.

In King County, SCAN supported the Best Starts for Kids ballot measure in 2015. The ballot measure passed with the benefit of our broad public education campaign, which included direct mail to more than 130,000 households in King County, targeted door-to-door canvassing and volunteer phone calls to more than 1,300 households. As a result, there are new early learning and intervention programs in King County for children ages 5 and under, as well as expanded access to early learning and home visiting programs.

In 2017, we worked with the Seattle City Council to pass a sweetened beverage tax that's providing millions for birth to three programs and child care in Seattle.

In 2018, we advocated for a significant expansion of the Seattle Preschool Program. We worked with Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan and Seattle City Council, who ultimately crafted a Families, Education, Preschool and Promise Levy that would give almost 15,000 kids access to Seattle's affordable, high-quality preschool program over the next 7-years. We then worked with our volunteers to get out the vote—knocking on doors and calling voters. Nearly 70% of Seattle voters support the levy.

Looking Ahead

In 2019, we are focused on supporting children in the first three of life. Specifically, we're advocating for: 1) a \$9 million increase in state funding for home visiting, to support a portfolio of programs, 2) supporting access to high-quality, affordable child care by increasing Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) base rates, especially for infants and toddlers and 3) creating and funding a pilot for early ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) for infants to children who are 3 years old.

We will also continue to work in the City of Seattle to ensure that the implementation of the Families, Education, Preschool and Promise Levy includes the strongest possible investment in the Seattle Preschool Program. At the federal level, we're working to protect Head Start and Early Head Start and to address child care deserts around the nation.

Children may only be 20 percent of our population, but they are 100 percent of our future. Investments in our kids are the best ones we can make.