

The Status of Young Children in Washington State: What Pediatricians Think

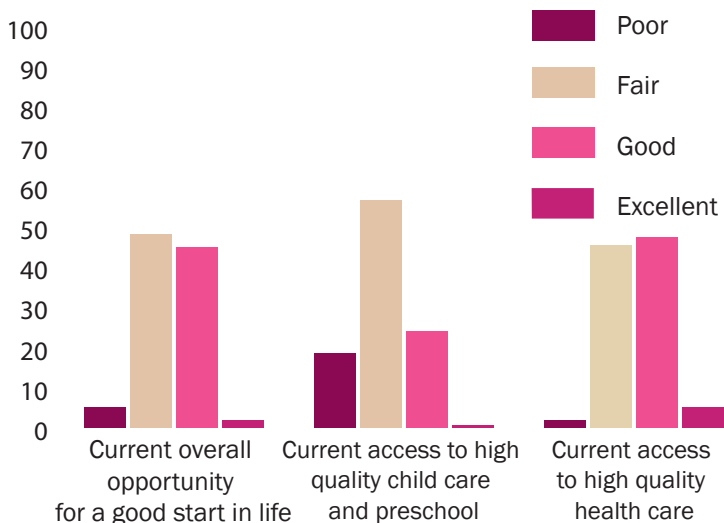


A recent survey of 229 pediatricians from 21 counties across Washington state revealed considerable concern about opportunities for young children; a belief that strategic investments will improve outcomes; and a conviction that the legislature should take action.

Young children lack opportunities for a good start in life

- 53% of pediatricians believe that children's overall opportunity for a good start in life is fair or poor
- 75% of pediatricians believe that access to high quality child care and preschool is fair or poor
- 46% of pediatricians believe that access to high quality health care is fair or poor

Pediatrician Ratings of Systems for
Young Children (Ages 0-5) in Washington State



Opportunities are not improving for young children

When asked to rate changes in the overall opportunity for a good start in life (i.e., supported parents, high quality child care and preschool, high quality health care) for young children in Washington state over the past five years, 30% of pediatricians believe it has deteriorated, 44% believe it has stayed about the same, and 25% believe it has improved.

Providing opportunities for young children will improve health and developmental outcomes

- **PARENTING INFORMATION AND SUPPORT:** 95% of pediatricians agree or strongly agree that providing information and support about child health and development and parenting to low- and moderate-income working parents will significantly improve health and development outcomes for children.
- **ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE:** 99% agree or strongly agree that providing high quality educational child care programs for children of low- and moderate-income working parents will significantly improve health and development outcomes for children.
- **ACCESS TO PRESCHOOL:** 94% agree or strongly agree that it is a serious problem that less than half of the state's eligible 4-year-olds are served by either Washington's state preschool (ECEAP- Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) or Head Start programs.

The legislature needs to do more to help families with young children

Only 11% of pediatricians agree or strongly agree that the legislature does enough to help working families with children, considering areas such as access to high quality health care, access to high quality child care and preschool, and availability of child abuse prevention services and programs.

ABOUT THE SURVEY: *The Status of Young Children in Washington State: What Pediatricians Think. Docs For Tots Opinion Survey Report.* January 2007. Organizational Research Services: Seattle, Washington.

Docs For Tots Washington State works to improve outcomes for children by engaging physicians in advocacy around early learning and other issues that impact young children and families. For more information, contact Dr. Jill Sells, Director, at JSells@DocsForTots.org.