



CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING TASK FORCE

MARCH 22ND, 2021

Present: Alicia Hanning, Asrid Newell, Beverly Porter, Carol Frazey, Debbie Ahl, Gregory Hansen, Jamie Desmul, Jen Wright, Keith Montoya, Komal Shah, Mara Kelley, Mary Sewright, Melissa Isenhardt, Mike Ford, Monica Koller, Ray Deck, Rosalva Santos-Guzman, Sterling Chick, Urvasi Graham, Vesla Tonnesson, Yarrow Greer, Chris Cochran, Escarleth DeLeon

Not Present: Silvia Johnson, Satpal Sidhu, Katrice Rodriguez, Brian Nelson, Brian Heinrich, Anne Granberg

Topic	Discussion/Outcome
<p>Welcome</p>	<p>Introductions, land acknowledgement, housekeeping and review of agreements led by Lewin Consulting.</p> <p>Land Acknowledgement:</p> <p>I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are here today on the ancestral homelands of Indigenous Peoples who have lived in the Salish Sea basin and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial, in particular, the Lhaq'temish (LOCK-tuh-mish) people who we recognize today to be the Lummi Nation, the Nooksack Tribe, and Semiahmoo.</p> <p>May we be mindful of the inherent owners of this land, our children, who are our future. Our future stewards of the land and advocates for the generation to come. May that truth guide our work and efforts to improve the well-being of all families and children, native and non-native, living in this beautiful county.</p> <p>This land acknowledgment is not meant to be a substitute for authentic relationship-building and understanding. It is meant to introduce us to one way we can show respect and honor for the sacrifices of the first people of this land.</p> <p>Please join me in expressing the deepest respect for our indigenous neighbors, and gratitude for the enduring stewardship of our shared lands and waterways.</p>
<p>Approve Meeting Minutes</p>	<p>No amendments to discuss, minutes were approved as presented.</p>
<p>What is Equity</p>	<p>Kenesha Lewin presented on equity.</p> <p>When Googling the word “equity” the majority of the definitions reflect around making things even, which is not the concept of what equity is. Equity is about providing what is needed not just to allow everyone to survive, but to thrive. We have to be able to meet everyone where they are at. Equity is not always equal. When it comes to education, community resources, and fund distribution it is not always equal, it depends on where the needs are and meeting them where they are at. An example, if a child is doing a math test and you know the child struggles with reading that one child may get extra support on comprehending the math questions. This provides equity, but it is not equal.</p> <p>Inclusion is removing the barriers to allow everyone to be included, which results in liberation. Racial, ethnic and gender disparities are in fact equity issues.</p> <p>We are not trying to fix the situation, we are here to meet them where they are at and help them to thrive. Giving everyone a seat at the table, does not equate to having a voice at the table.</p>



<p>What is Equity (continued)</p>	<p>As a community we need to first build humility which builds humanity. Removing the “us versus them” and the “I am the expert” mentality is the humility component. Next, we need to involve the community, co-create allowing access which provides equity. Addressing the power dynamic will allow those at the table have a voice that is heard. Considering the root cause in systems will provide direction to meeting everyone where they are at. Finally, take action. As Amanda Gorman said, “Just is, isn’t always justice.”</p> <p>The video, To Be More Than a Statistic was shown, requesting the task force to consider Whatcom County while processing the content.</p>
<p>Who is on the Task Force and Why?</p>	<p>The membership of this task force is intended to help us better address equity. This task force is comprised of 30 members, 4 Whatcom County Health Department staff, and Lewin Consulting. Of the 30 members, there are 15 appointed members from groups representing the community including Early Learning Coalition, Whatcom Taking Action, Whatcom County School Superintendents, City of Bellingham, Whatcom County Council, Lummi Nation, Nooksack Tribe, Generations Forward, Whatcom County Executive Office. The other 15 are made up applicants that prioritize inclusion of black, indigenous, care giving, living in rural areas, housing agencies, mental health providers, health care providers, serving our families, and people who have a heart for our community of families.</p>
<p>Child and Family Action Plan: Whatcom Working Toward Well-Being</p>	<p>Astrid Newell and Emily O’Connor provided an overview of the Child and Family Well-Being Action Plan. The plan was provided this past week to the members for review.</p> <p>We recognize that the County government can work to develop funding sources, create policy, leverage partnerships, provide programs, and serve as a model employer.</p> <p>The plan was developed over the past decade with a significant number of community groups and efforts focusing on children. That community momentum was carried into the Public Health Advisory Board. During the 2019 Early Childhood Resolution there was a call out for a Community Action Plan, which was adopted in early 2020 by the Health Board.</p> <p>An exciting component of this plan is coalescing of community leaders to bring forward. If we invest in our kids, we will get it right for everyone. That foundational support that we provide or do not provide is what will impact the future. This plan comes at it from both directions, through establishing new structures and processes to elevate the well-being of all children and families as a county priority, and leverage existing county resources and public-private partnership to address immediate child and family needs.</p> <p>Some initial actions that were recommended included infrastructure and budget, County task force, fiscal analysis and funding, family services. The Health Department has been assigned the infrastructure and budget, this task force is the task force in reference. Initially the analysis on fiscal and funding was to occur in 2020, but with COVID-19 that was delayed. A few recommendations were made about culturally appropriate and trauma informed services, with some funding allocation with a Health Navigation System with regard to family services.</p> <p>Rachel Lucy shared her experience in the 9 years she participated on the Public Health Advisory Board and year since she termed out, working on this action plan. A central lens to creating this plan was about the commitment in our community to make child and family well-being our priority. Being a task force is ideal as it is a force of accountability and force to take action. Remember this is not a discussion, or an assessment, but this plan is an action plan. We cannot afford another 10 years of discussion.</p> <p>Meredith Hayes shared she is most excited about the commitment of time and effort this task force has made to put this into action. This will change the dynamics of the table. Remember there are many organizations to be helpful and be supportive.</p> <p>Beverly Porter shared that she is most excited that people with disabilities and their advocates are at the table, sharing power, and shining light on misconceptions about people with disabilities.</p> <p>Sterling Chick shared information about the ACES study and research on how the brain works and the effects of both toxic stress and resiliency on the brain. He tied this research to our focus areas on mental health, child care, and housing.</p> <p>Monica Koller shared the intention behind much of the work of Policy, Advocacy, and Funding team of Generations Forward: to center the voices and lived experiences of BIPOC families, relying on the wisdom and knowledge of these families as experts in the successes and challenges of being parents in Whatcom County.</p>
<p>Public Comment</p>	<p>None.</p>

Closing	Remember "Just is, isn't always Justice" – Amanda Gorman
<i>Next Meeting</i>	Next regular meeting: April 12th, 2021 <u>Location: Virtual</u>