

INVESTING IN THE PROMISE OF CHILDHOOD



Save the Children®
100 YEARS



Progress Report: Expanding Early Learning Programs in Washington State

Science tells us that the early years—specifically the first 1,000 days—are uniquely important because the brain undergoes its most prolific period of development. This rapid growth is a double edge sword: on the one hand, young children’s brains are more open to learning and enriching influences; on the other, young children who lack stimulation and responsive caregiving may fall behind and never catch up—with long-term, negative results.

Because disparities only grow larger over time, Save the Children provides a continuum of early childhood development and school-age programs in marginalized, rural U.S. communities so girls and boys enter kindergarten ready to learn and achieve basic proficiency in math and reading by the end of third grade, an important predictor of educational attainment and career success.

As a result of your generous support, we are launching our signature early learning program, Early Steps to School Success, and school-based literacy programs in the Yakima Valley. In the past several months, we have:

- **Established our presence and credibility.** We have partnered with Heritage University, which has been a wonderful source of information on local school districts, community resources, connections and other issues.
- **Identified partner schools.** We have selected three partner schools in the Grandview School District, which serves a predominantly Hispanic population. We will officially launch Early Steps this summer.
- **Explored the Collective Impact Approach.** Because interventions such as Early Steps, alone, will not produce systemic change, we are developing a Collective Impact Approach, in which local leaders from different sectors commit to building the capacity and infrastructure needed to generate sustainable improvements in educational outcomes. We are working with StriveTogether and Berea College’s Partners for Education to develop a model for high-need rural communities in South Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee.

Senior staff and key members of the board of directors from Heritage have traveled to Berea in Kentucky to learn how to lead a Collective Impact Approach, and to visit our Early Steps program in Perry County. We hope to develop a Collective Impact Approach with Heritage in the Yakima Valley and our new Early Steps program would be the first step in this initiative. To read more about this approach, see these two recent articles in the New York Times [here](#) and [here](#).

With your support, we are giving thousands of underserved children living in rural communities in Washington State the best chance to reach their full potential. Thank you!