

Early care, early learning [US] ^[1]

Editorial

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EXCERPTS

Momentum is building for a significant investment in the quality and quantity of child care.

The movement is welcome. Success should be measured by how rapidly child-care centers broaden from mere baby-sitting to places offering educational enrichment and stimulation.

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[Washington] Gov. Christine Gregoire has been on the right side of this issue from day one. Not long after entering office, Gregoire merged three offices to create the Department of Early Learning. The move places day care, child care and preschool education under one strategic roof.

Gregoire has teamed up with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to lead "Thrive by Five: The Washington Early Learning Fund." The entity will boost training, education and support for child-care center staff and for parents.

This is an important involvement of philanthropy in an area where its dollars are sorely needed. Still, federal and state dollars account for some \$350 million to \$400 million spent annually on child care in this state.

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The group will fund two early-learning centers, one in White Center and another in Eastern Washington. The plan is to give these communities something they've been lacking: high-quality child care with educational and developmental components.

These are good things. Children of privilege have long benefited from early learning. Their parents enrolled them in private preschools with low teacher-to-child ratios and learning plans for students as young as 2. Toys and activities designed to stimulate young brains are a mainstay in private early-learning centers.

These are educational advantages every child deserves.

- reprinted from the Seattle Times

Region: United States ^[2]

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