State of Washington’s Kids 2018
Dear Reader,

We have the honor of interacting with Washington families across this great state in our public roles and in our personal lives. We constantly see the promise of the next generation: the infants, toddlers, children and youth who'll inherit the tasks of leadership, community-building, working, parenting and guiding the children in the generations that follow them.

Data shows that today’s parents and public officials have reason to be proud. In the yearly rankings of well-being provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s KIDS COUNT Data Book, our state consistently ranks among the upper 20 states in the nation. And yet, the data also shows troubling disparities along lines of race and ethnicity.

Young kids of color are leading our state into a more racially diverse future. Yet too many of these kids have never been well served by the old structures that disproportionately channeled opportunity, education and prosperity along lines of race. We can’t let those racist structures stand in the way of an ever greater share of our youngest Washingtonians.

The State of Washington’s Kids 2018 lifts up key data that showcases the ways policymakers, parents and community leaders must work to build a healthy future for all. As part of our research for this report, we also asked experts and community members across the state to tell us what it will take to make Washington the best state in which to grow up.

We hope that, as you read the data profiles, you’ll consider how to champion the solutions that fuel our common future. Together, we can create the conditions that allow kids of every background to thrive.

Thank you,

Paola Maranan, Executive Director, Children’s Alliance
Misha Werschkul, Executive Director, Washington State Budget & Policy Center

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Kids are Leading the Way Toward a New Washington State

**Kids of color are driving population growth among young people.** Over the last decade, the number of Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander and mixed-race children has grown by more than 30 percent each. The number of American Indian/Alaska Native and white children has declined.³

- Washington’s kids by race and ethnicity, 2016:
  - 57% White
  - 20% Latino
  - 8% Mixed Race
  - 7% Asian
  - 4% Black
  - 2% American Indian
  - 1% Pacific Islander

- Growth rates by race and ethnicity, 2006 to 2016:
  - Latino: 39%
  - Pacific Islander: 38%
  - Mixed Race: 33%
  - Asian: 32%
  - Black: 15%
  - White: −7%
  - American Indian: −9%

**Kids are changing the state’s demographics.** Washington’s population is projected to become majority people of color around 2050, and youth are at the forefront of this trend. Already, 43 percent of kids in our state are kids of color.¹ And in eight of Washington’s 39 counties, the population of children is already majority kids of color.²

Percent kids of color by county, 2015:
- Less than 25%
- 25% to 39%
- 40% to 49%
- 50% or more

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Washington's kids of color bring a wide range of cultural backgrounds to our state. Among the 43 percent of kids in our state who are kids of color, the Asian and Pacific Islander population is the most diverse, with Chinese, Indian, Vietnamese, Filipino and Korean representing the largest groups. Two-thirds of Latino kids are of Mexican descent; the remaining third can trace their roots to Puerto Rico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Cuba and other countries in Central and South America. Many families represented by the African diaspora can find it difficult to trace their origins to a particular country or ethnicity—which is one legacy of slavery in the Western Hemisphere. Of the Black population that does specify their ancestry in the American Community Survey by the U.S. Census Bureau, Ethiopian/Eritrean, Somalis and those from other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are the largest groups.4

Many of Washington's kids are in immigrant families. Approximately 27 percent of kids are foreign-born or reside with at least one foreign-born parent. Over four-fifths of Asian Pacific Islander kids, over half of Latino kids and over one-third of Black kids are in immigrant families.5